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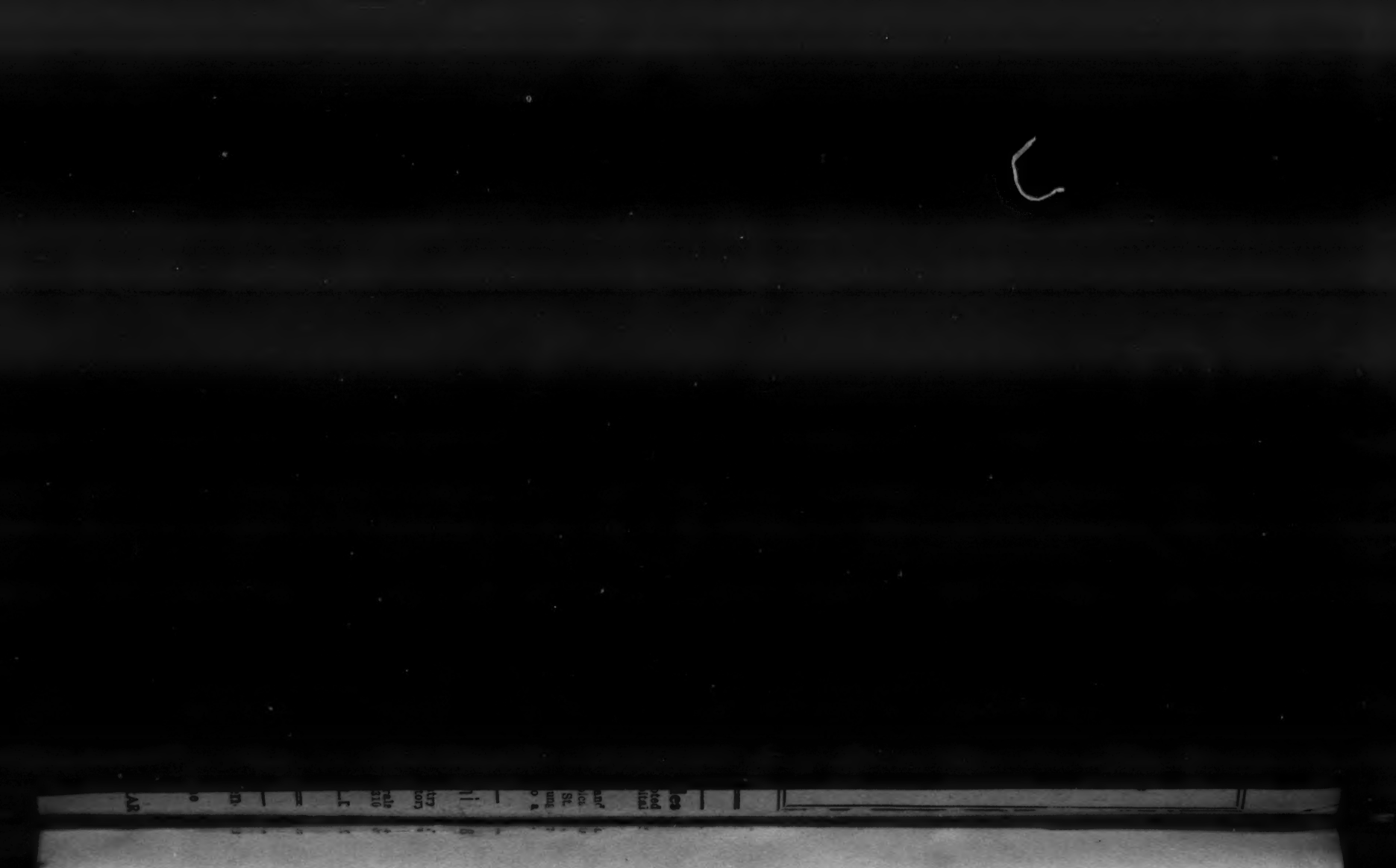


BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCXLVIII. OCTOBER 1919. VOL. CCVI.

ANTRANIK.

I.

I WAS sitting in my office, on December 13, trying to master the intricacies of demobilisation, and bored with the whole business, when the telephone bell rang, and Col. S——'s voice from the other end asked me to go over to H.Q. and see him at once. On my arrival he shot papers and a map at me, with the words, "Read these, and if you want to know anything further, ask me. I want you to start to-night."

The papers were orders for a Mission to Zangezeur to an Armenian leader, Antranik, of whom I had not heard previously. The object was twofold: on the one hand, to find out what could be done for him and the thirty thousand Turkish Armenian refugees who were with him; and, on the other, to inquire into atrocities which the Tartars alleged he had committed against Mussulman villages since the armistice. My orders were to proceed to Shusha, and from there push on to Gerusi, where Antranik was reported to have his headquarters. Our party consisted of three British officers, a section of L.A.M. cars, and representatives of the Azerbaijan Government and of the Armenian National Council in Baku.[1]

[1] After the breaking up of the Russian armies on the Caucasian front attempts were made by the Allies to combine Armenians, Georgians, Tartars, and such Russians as were still in the field, to prevent the Turks and Germans from overrunning Trans-Caucasia. These efforts failed, chiefly owing to Turkish and German intrigues playing on the mutual jealousy of the three subject races; in consequence, with the exception of the mountains of Karabagh and Zangezeur, the whole country eventually accepted Turkish or German occupation. By the Treaty of Batoum, Trans-Caucasia was divided into the puppet republics of Georgia, Erivan (Armenian), and Azerbaijan (Tartar).

Our special coaches were ordered to be attached to the daily train to Tiflis, due to start at 7 P.M., so about 6.30 we arrived at the station. As usual, there was trouble in getting away. The Russian revolution destroyed the discipline on the Caucasian railways. The Turks, moreover, had removed the greater part of the remaining rolling stock, and, in consequence, there were few trains left, and fewer engines. As Baku was only just regaining contact with the outer world of Caucasia, hundreds of inhabitants were daily trying to get out of the town, which was short of food. The local Tartar police were incompetent, and the railway authorities issued unlimited tickets. On a previous evening the intending passengers, who were mostly full of vodka, had shot the guard and the engine-driver in order to get them to start the train, and *pour encourager les autres.* Eventually we started about 10 P.M.

We arrived at Evlack about 10 A.M. The station was full of Turks withdrawing to Tiflis. The station authorities, Russians for the most part, were obliging, and, while still polite to the retiring Turk, were prepared to do their best for the new arrivals. The Turkish soldiers examined the armoured cars with interest, but their officers ignored our presence. The general commanding the Azerbaijan troops in the Shusha area happened to be in the station, and asked for an interview. Formerly a general in the Russian Army on the Galician front, he was now considerably the worse for wear, his uniform dirty, and himself both unwashed and unshaved. Privacy in Caucasia is unknown, so we discussed affairs in the restaurant with inquisitive hangers-on around.

As it took a considerable time to unload the cars, we decided to make an early start for Shusha the next morning. In Caucasia, however, it is one thing to say you will start early; it is quite another matter actually to start. The non-British section of our party were travelling in a touring car belonging to the Azerbaijan Government. It was probably a fine car in 1914, but it had long since reached the stage of scrap-iron. Only one cylinder worked, and the tyres were a combination of patched varieties of all sizes, tied on with rope and wire. The driver was a Russian Pole—a mere boy, with a smiling face—who, in spite of our doubts, declared that he could take his car anywhere. Finally, about three hours late, we got away, ourselves leading with the L.A.M. cars and their attendant Fords, the touring car bringing up the rear and making a noise like a battery of machine-guns.

The road to Shusha, for the first forty miles as far as Agdam, is flat and uninteresting. The population is now entirely Mussulman. Many of them are nomadic shepherds, who in the summer migrate to the hill pastures of Kara-

bagh with their families and flocks. In Russian times they were a source of considerable trouble, owing to their numbers and predatory instincts. Now that they are for the most part armed, and the Russian Government is no longer present to control them, they are a standing menace to the peace of the mountains and the safety of the Armenians. They seem to have suffered very little from the war — a different state of affairs to the Shemakha area north of the railway, where there is scarcely a Tartar house unburnt.

At Barda we met a Turkish battalion and battery of artillery withdrawing to Evlack. These, we were told, were the last Turkish troops from the Shusha area. The Azerbaijan car punctured two or three times an hour, so it was late afternoon before we reached Agdam—a large market town now entirely inhabited by Mussulmans. The streets are narrow and very dirty, but the shops were well stocked with food and the usual wares that one sees in an Eastern bazaar. The population took very little notice of us. This strange lack of curiosity, which seems to be common to all Tartars, strikes one, after being in Persia where the population was full of inquisitiveness. The difference in the children is most marked. In Persia they greeted one with smiles; I have never seen a Tartar child show any sign of pleasure.

We were entertained for the night by a local Mussulman landowner, at whose house we met the leading local Government officials. Of these, perhaps the district judge and the officer commanding the troops were the most interesting. The former was a Tartar whose knowledge of law was infinitesimal—he had never even heard of the Code Napoleon; the latter was the nearest approach to a soldier I had yet met. Their policy towards us had evidently been agreed upon beforehand, as they all expressed pleasure at our arrival in the first place, and followed that with a description of the anarchy in the district due to the lawlessness of the Armenians, and finally offered us every assistance in restoring order — incidentally, of course, at the expense of the Armenians.

The country between Agdam and Shusha forms a sharp contrast to the lower road. At Askeran — the gate of Karabagh — it passes into the mountains, and from there onwards, winding up the pass, ends in a finely engineered climb to the top, where the town of Shusha stands. At a Mussulman village near Khankendi, where formerly the Russian garrison was quartered, the inhabitants petitioned us to protect them against the Armenians. While we were drinking tea there, an Azerbaijan militiaman was murdered by three Armenians about a mile farther up the road, and the body was brought to us for our inspection on its way to burial.

The approach to Shusha is picturesque. A steep climb of about 1500 feet brought us above the snow-line, and, on turning a sharp bend, the town, perched on top of the cliffs, suddenly appeared in view across the valley. The whole of the inhabitants seemed to be awaiting our arrival. As the Ford cars were finding difficulty in climbing the slippery road, we waited outside the town till they closed up, and then commenced a ceremonial entry. A mounted escort led the way, and we were met at the gate by the Mayor, an Armenian, dressed in his robes of office, who delivered a speech of welcome. As it was very cold and getting dark, and we were all tired and hungry, I cut this part short, and we pushed on into the town. We were immediately faced with a delicate diplomatic situation. The town of Shusha is almost equally Mussulman and Armenian, and the two communities live in separate quarters. Between them is a ruined portion, which was burned during the disturbances in 1905. Both the Mussulmans and Armenians had prepared lodgings for our reception, and to accept the hospitality of one meant offending the other. To solve the problem, I ordered the procession to go to the quarters provided by the Mayor *as Mayor*, without reference to his nationality, and told the Tartar Chief of the District to tell this to the Mussulmans. So at last we arrived at the hotel prepared for our reception in the Armenian quarter. A dinner with toasts and speeches ended a long day.

A curious sidelight on the mentality of the Caucasian, showing how deeply he is infected with the old Russian spirit, appeared in their treatment of the British N.C.O.'s and men of the L.A.M. Car Section. Their officer was assured that every arrangement had been made for the men's comfort, but, on inspection, he found that there was no sign of either food or lodging for them. In the subsequent discussion, both Tartars and Armenians were obviously at a loss to understand why a British officer should consider the comfort of his men before his own.

The morning was taken up with interviews with the various Armenian leaders from the surrounding mountain districts, and in collecting statistics of the numbers and condition of the refugees in their respective areas. They all told the same tale—lack of food, medicine, clothing, and cover. Disease, chiefly typhus, was rampant everywhere, and Tartar oppression, burning of villages, and massacre of the inhabitants. The tendency was, of course, to exaggerate numbers, but the condition of the Armenians in the hills was obviously pitiable. The Mussulmans had their turn in the afternoon. They asked for British troops to restore law and order, com-

plained of our having sent away the Turks without putting British troops in their place, and finally asked that, if we could not keep order, they should be left to settle their own difficulties with the Armenians. This last request was of course bluff, as only ten days previously they had appealed to the British in Baku for protection against the Armenians, on the ground that otherwise they would be utterly destroyed, and in this they were not far away from the truth. The general situation seemed to be that, now we had arrived, the Armenians were disappointed with us, because we had come as neutrals and not as allies, and the Mussulmans were annoyed with us because we were going to help the Armenian refugees.

Most of the time was taken up with arranging affairs with D——, who had to be left behind with the L.A.M. cars to keep things moving, and in trying to fix up our party for Gerusi. It was originally to have consisted of S—— and myself, the Azerbaijan representative, the Armenian from Baku, my orderly, and S——'s Georgian boy, a "gamin" of about fourteen, whom he picked up in the streets, and who talked many languages, and was armed with many strange weapons. For these, three phaetons were necessary. I also asked for a small escort to take us through, as the roads were reported to be disturbed. Then the trouble began. For the road between Shusha and Gerusi was alternately Tartar and Armenian, and between Antranik's area and the Tartar post at Abdular there was a No Man's Land of five or six miles. The phaeton-drivers would not go without an escort. No Armenians would escort through the Tartar area, and no Tartar would escort through the Armenian area, and neither would stay in the other's area till we came back. Moreover, the Azerbaijan representative refused to come to Gerusi, but offered his cousin instead. Finally two Armenians who had been through to Baku offered to accompany us, so with these and the Azerbaijan substitute we started next day about 10.30 A.M. A foot of snow had fallen in the night, and the horses looked as if they had had nothing to eat for a month. A large crowd turned out to see us off, including the Mayor and the chief of the district. The mothers of the drivers wept over their sons, and bade them a long farewell; but eventually, after much abuse and dragging the phaeton to the top of the hill, we got away.

The road from Shusha to Abdular, the half-way house to Gerusi, crosses the pass at about 7000 feet. The view from the top, looking south towards Persia, with the successive ranges of mountains covered with snow, gave an impression of desolate grandeur such as I had never experienced before. The valleys, which two years ago were thickly populated with Ar-

menians, were deserted, the villages all burnt, and the inhabitants, such as had escaped, fled to the mountains. Except for the call of an occasional fox or wolf, there was nothing to break the absolute stillness of the air. Abdular was reached after dark. It is perched on a hill off the road, and is one of the two villages still standing between Shusha and Gerusi. The inhabitants are Mussulmans, and the village consists of little else than a collection of stone huts built on to the side of the hill. Antranik was on the point of capturing this village when he received his first intimation that the armistice had been signed, and that he was to cease his advance on Shusha. The local police officer (Pristav) received us, and we spent the night in a windowless room about 15 feet by 9, with a Turkish soldier who had taken service with Azerbaijan keeping sentry at, and inside, the door, until we turned him out.

More snow fell in the night. Before leaving we received a deputation of the villagers. There was no doubt the peasant population were weary of war, and ready to settle down to their peaceful occupations, but they were terrified of reprisals by the Armenians for past misdeeds. Just before reaching the last Mussulman outpost on the road, S——'s phaeton struck a large stone hidden in the snow, and he and his boy disappeared under the overturned carriage. Beyond a snow-bath they were none the worse, but the body of the vehicle had parted from the wheels, and it looked like our being minus a phaeton. However, the driver produced some string, tied the two halves together, and off we started again. At the farthest Mussulman post, we were met by a picturesque group of some thirty hillmen, armed to the teeth. Our Tartar companion talked to them, and told them we had come to bring peace, so with an "Allah be with you," we passed on into No Man's Land. On the other side of the valley we were met by a squadron of Antranik's cavalry, who escorted us to Dig. I was immensely struck with the men. They were all Turkish Armenians, and quite unlike any other Armenians I had yet met. Considering that they had been out off from the outer world for a year, they were extraordinarily well turned out, and were mounted for the most part on good Caucasian ponies. In addition to a rifle, most of them carried a sword or dagger, or both, and almost all had pistols. Several wore Russian decorations. I shook hands with the officer (who, I discovered afterwards, had served in the Bulgarian army in the Turco-Bulgar war), and walked along the line, after which they rode on ahead of us, singing Armenian songs till we reached Dig. There the villagers turned out to welcome us, and after bread and salt had been offered, we

turned in to the schoolhouse for the night.

Ours was the first party that had reached Armenian Zangezeur from the outer world for nearly a year, and we were besieged for news: what had happened to the Turks—were the Germans beaten—where were the English—when were they coming to help the Armenians—what had happened to their relatives in Baku? and a host of questions, to most of which we did not know the answer ourselves.

Before leaving we presented our host, the village schoolmaster, with some tea, sugar, and cigarettes, which had been unobtainable there for the last year. Five versts from Gerusi, which is a small hill town with a new quarter built in modern Russian style and lying in a valley, we were met by a cavalry escort and General Antranik's medical officer. He talked English quite well, as he took his degree at Boston University. On hearing of the Armenian massacres in Turkey in 1915, when all his relatives were killed, he came over as a volunteer in the Russian army, and after the revolution joined Antranik. Two ladies on horseback, riding astride, also accompanied the escort. We had been provided with mounts at Dig, so on entering the straight for home, the whole party broke into a trot, and then a gallop right on to the village green. There we were received by the President of the National Council and the local battalion, and thence were taken to his house, where Antranik was waiting to receive us.

Antranik was standing at the top of the open staircase, wearing the undress uniform of a Russian Major-General, with several decorations, and my first impression of him was that of a powerfully built man, of rather more than medium height. He has a big head, and large strong face. His hair is grey, and brushed back over his forehead in the Bulgar fashion. His mouth, which is partly concealed by a grey moustache with the ends turned upwards, seems at first almost cruel, but in his eyes there is humour and kindliness. Character is stamped on the whole face, and the strong grip of his hand, and the straight look in his eyes, made me feel at once that I was in the presence of a man. Later in the evening, when I saw his face in repose, he gave me the impression of being mentally exhausted, worn out by continual strain.

As I walked with him into the reception-room, I felt that he was something quite different from anything I had yet met in Caucasia. His soldiers were the first real soldiers we had seen. I understood them now, for here was a man who knew what was meant by a soldier, and they were the reflection of his personality. Whatever he may, or may not, have done, instinct told me that here was a white man.

At the meal provided for us

by our host, the President of the Council, four places were laid together—for General Antranik, S——, myself, and my orderly. Not wishing to offend my host, but at the same time being uncertain how the general would take the presence of a private soldier sitting at his table, I asked his opinion. "The British private soldier has won this war," was his answer. "I am proud to have one at my table." Later on, when the toasts were being proposed, he rose again and said, "I raise my glass to the English soldiers and the English mothers who bore them." His personality overshadowed every one. When he spoke every one was silent to hear what he had to say. If there was any point under discussion, "Pasha," as they call him, was asked for his opinion. If a story was told, the speaker addressed himself to their hero. There is some sort of magnetic attraction in him which draws everything to him. I was already in the toils.

After dinner we had a private conference between Antranik, the Mussulman representative, and ourselves, to try and come to some arrangement by which his claims and those of the Tartars could be reconciled, and food brought through to the refugees. Antranik, obviously bitterly disappointed that the British, for whose arrival he had waited and dreamed through the fearful hardships of the past year, should suggest even compromise with the Mussulmans, finally could contain himself no longer, and burst out in a tirade against the Mussulmans and their devilish massacres of Armenians. Antranik, angry in his country's cause, is a picture I shall never forget. Springing to his feet, the veins in his forehead swelling, his eyes flashing fire, his body quivering with passion, he shouted his defiance of the oppressors of his race. Surely the inspired seers of the Old Testament were such as he. The storm quickly passed; once more he was outwardly the same strong, silent man, but his face showed more markedly than ever the physical exhaustion which the intense mental strain was producing in him.

For the Mussulman with us, the situation was one of great delicacy. Unlike the ordinary Tartar, he is a man of education and refinement, dignified, courteous, and in the truest sense of the word a gentleman. I think his whole object in coming with us was to assist in bringing about a settlement which would enable the suffering peasantry of both races to be helped in their misery. He listened in silence to the outburst, and then quietly with instinctive delicacy returned to the search for common points of agreement. The evening ended with agreement on general points, leaving details for the morrow. So the day closed. My head remained neutral; my heart went out to this patriot warrior, who had kept his fainting band together by his own great heart and his undying faith in

the coming of the British to help them in their need. And now they had come, as it were, asking him to treat with his enemies, and about to sit in judgment on him.

S—— left for Shusha, with despatches for Baku and instructions to send on D——. I spent the day visiting the hospital, orphanage, and soldiers' billets, to see with my own eyes what the actual conditions were. The hospital arrangements were appalling. No blankets, no medical appliances, no luxuries such as tea, sugar, or milk, practically no fuel, and a large number of sick and wounded. The lack of soap made it impossible to keep the patients clean. In the hospital, when the news went round that a British officer had come to see them, there were men who literally cried at the prospect of the long-awaited arrival of the Allies to help them in their misery. The state of the orphanage was little better. The lady in charge was ill with influenza in a room full of children, half of whom were also sick. There was no milk even for these. Gerusi, being the centre, was presumably the best off. It made one wonder what the conditions must be in the outlying districts such as Sisian, where there were about 30,000 refugees from Turkish Armenia. Antranik came to see me in the afternoon. He has a curious way of answering your questions with a parable, told slowly and with continual sidelong glances at your face to make sure you are getting the points. He asked me to meet representatives of the National Council and his officers next day.

I visited the various government offices in the morning to learn the methods of local government. The postmaster, a Baltic-Russian, guarded a post office which had done no business for a year. At the law courts, the old Russian judge still dispensed justice according to the Russian Code and without reward. He is so poor that he can be seen daily on the hillside, collecting and carrying in sticks to keep his old body warm. In the afternoon I went to the meeting at Antranik's headquarters. The party were seated round the table, and a place was left for me opposite the general. Every one looked towards him, and he then stood up, and, addressing me, related first what the Armenian race had suffered at the hands of the Turks during the war, how they had sacrificed everything, believing that England, France, and America would eventually come to their assistance; how, after the breaking up of the old Russian army, the Allies had raised the volunteer army in Tiflis; how this army had been dispersed by the Turks, and the greater part had compromised with the enemy; how his detachment had refused to submit to our common enemy, the Turk; and how, after fighting around Khoi and Julfa and attempting to join the British in Persia, he had come to Karabagh to save the

Armenians from massacre and carry on the fight against the Turks; how he had never touched the Mussulmans unless they had joined the Turks against the Armenians; how the money which had been provided by the Allies for his help had never reached him; how the republic of Erivan, the creature of the Turks, had disowned him; how he had always believed that the British would come in the end and save them. His officers that morning had told him that his men could bear their sufferings no longer. General Bukratooni at Baku had just sent him a million roubles. After repatriating the refugees in Nakichevan, he would discharge his men with the rest of the money at Erivan, and ask the Erivan government to send troops to hold Zangezeur. He must repatriate the Nakichevan refugees, as they were dying at the rate of thirty a day. The relief of other refugees could be done in future through the National Council. Finally, he told how practically a million Armenians had been killed by the Turks; how he had been trying to get to Shusha to save the Armenians there from the fate of their fellow-countrymen in Baku, when the British orders to stop all fighting reached him. The refugees, who had followed him from the territory overrun by the Turks, were now his only care. They had been saved through him, and his last duty was to put them once more back in their homes.

His speech took me by surprise, as I had been under the impression that we were on the point of arranging a working agreement, and I was certain that if he attempted to push his way into Nakichevan by force, there would be serious fighting; so I asked him to delay his movement till I could get into communication with Baku, promising to do everything to hasten the repatriation and succour of the refugees, if he would postpone forcing his way into Nakichevan. This he finally promised to do.

Before parting in the evening, Antranik, the Mussulman representative, and myself, went through the accusations made by the Tartars against him, and the Mussulman representative declared himself satisfied that the accusations were untrue. Antranik took the proceedings quietly, and showed no outward sign of his feelings.

I started back for Shusha early, taking with me the Mussulman representative and the Armenian from Baku, and also a party of 400 Armenians, refugees from the Shusha area, who had fled to Zangezeur the previous summer, and had been unable to get back. We arrived in a heavy snowstorm about 8 P.M. The Armenians were giving an entertainment to the British contingent, and, headed by the Mayor, a deputation came to ask me to dine with them. But after three days in the company of Antranik, I preferred to dine alone with the memory of a man rather

than in the company of political monkeys, so refused the invitation.

I summoned the leading Armenians and Tartars to H.Q., and then asked our Mussulman companion to relate what he had seen in Gerusi. He told the whole story of our journey without missing a point and without comment. His narrative incidentally refuted most of the accusations brought against Antranik. Coming from a Mussulman, it was clearly distasteful to the Mussulmans, but they confined themselves for the moment to asking a few further questions.

II.

The Russians, and the races of Caucasia who have adopted many of the Russian habits, are great believers in petitions. The petition is, as a rule, written on foolscap. The bearer of it will petition you on any subject which interests him, particularly anything touching his pocket, and is quite convinced it must also interest you. He invariably assumes that you knew nothing of either history or himself, and, in consequence, generally begins with a history of Caucasia for the last hundred years at least. This is followed by his own life-story in detail. On the last page comes the cause of the writer's eloquence —he has no money, and, wishing to go to Tiflis, desires the British to provide him with a car, or he was robbed a year ago by the Turks, or Tartars, or Bolsheviks, and wishes the British either to recover the money or compensate him themselves. Moreover, he has no sense of shame. He will push his way into your bedroom or sitting-room at any hour, and expect you to attend to his wants at once. Finally, unless you are prepared to do exactly what he wants, while appearing outwardly to accept your decision, he will set to work in secret to thwart you in other matters by every means in his power.

It rained deputations all day, all bearing petitions, and all were Armenians or Russians —mostly small officials under the old Russian Government and practically all with the same complaint,—that the Azerbaijan Government would not pay them. They did not seem to be able to recognise that he who pays the piper calls the tune, and that if they would not recognise the Azerbaijan Government, that Government would not pay them.

The Mussulmans were bringing economic pressure to bear on the Armenians in various ways; amongst others, they would not allow any money to be sent from Baku to the banks in Shusha, as practically all the banks' creditors are Armenians. As a result of their policy, the ordinary business of life was practically at a stand-still, and the civil

population had nothing else to do but talk politics and hatch plots.

I sent messengers out to the districts to fetch in the Armenian leaders, to report on the steps they were taking to organise relief, and to check their figures. The arrival of Sokrat Beg, the chief of these, was made the excuse for a pro-Armenian demonstration with bands and flags. The Mayor was at the bottom of the business, and got "bitten" by me in consequence. Sokrat disclaimed all desire for notoriety.

The meeting with the Armenian leaders was interesting. They are of all types, and each has in his area an armed force with which to repel Mussulman attacks. None of them are professional soldiers, though Sokrat, who is a landed proprietor of good family, proved his ability both in organisation and tactics against the Turks, when they tried to overrun Northern Karabagh. One of the leaders is an ex-priest. With the exception of Sokrat, none of them struck one as being men of ability.

A messenger from D—— arrived in the afternoon of the 30th with evidence of murders of Armenians by Mussulmans near Abdular. The evening was enlivened by heavy firing in the street just outside our H.Q., but on going out we found it was only the police chasing a burglar.

A wire arrived from Baku with instructions for arrangements with Antranik for repatriation of his refugees and temporary maintenance of his troops.

In the afternoon of the 31st, the wire to Baku was cut at Agdam, and rumours reached us of a disturbance there. Later reports were that the Tartar troops in Agdam had revolted and arrested the Russian officers paid by Azerbaijan to instruct them. Our Ford vans, which had been sent to the railway station to bring out despatches, failed to return.

New Year's Day was a succession of excursions and alarums. At breakfast a message arrived from the Tartar chief of the district asking us to come and see him owing to important developments at Agdam. As the situation was obscure, we set off with the L.A.M. cars, but on the way one of them broke down. While arranging for oxen to tow it back to H.Q., a Russian chauffeur, whom we had previously befriended, came up and informed us that he had just brought a Turkish officer from Agdam, and that he was now in the barracks. On arriving at the office of the chief of the district in the other car, the Azerbaijan representative met us and informed us that there had been a mutiny in Agdam, that the local population there, suspecting us of aiding the Armenians, had stopped our cars and sent them back to Evlach, that the soldiers had imprisoned their Russian officers, and that he and the chief of the district were virtually under arrest in

Shusha. He also told us that the Armenian from Baku, who had gone with us to Gerusi, had been arrested on his way back at Agdam and all his papers taken from him, that one of these was an incriminating letter from Antranik to the Armenians in Baku, and that the despatches he was carrying for us had also been taken. Altogether the situation looked none too pleasant. Obviously, if what he said was true, we might very soon be in a pretty tight corner ourselves. He who hesitates is lost, so I told him to order the leading Mussulmans of Shusha to report to me at his office at once.

The Tartars are Asiatics, and in the East a man is taken at his own valuation, so on their arrival, to the number of about twenty, including two Turkish officers, I told them that, by stopping my messengers on the road, they had committed an act of war against the Allies, and that as soon as the news was known in Baku a punitive expedition would most certainly start out: the best thing they could do now to save their own skins was to disown the conspiracy; that as far as I was concerned I would have nothing more to do with them till they gave me a written guarantee. This must provide (1) that all our messengers and cars are allowed to come through at once, and are never again detained; (2) that they submit within three days at British H.Q. the names of the ringleaders of the movement; and (3) that they produce the letter alleged to have been written by Antranik for my inspection. (I felt sure he had not written such a letter, and, as a matter of fact, the letter was never forthcoming.) After trying to quibble, they eventually agreed and signed. Before dismissing them, I told them they could now tell me their grievances, if any. They said that they had been informed that the Armenians would attack them that night, and asked that an Armenian guard should patrol the Tartar quarter, and a Tartar guard the Armenian, to guarantee that neither massed for attack on the other. This I agreed to, after adding a British N.C.O. to each party.

In the afternoon S—— and I went for a walk, and were fired at from a neighbouring Armenian village. The first shots were high, but the second burst was unpleasantly close, so we returned to H.Q.

The night passed off quietly, and though there was still no news from Agdam, we decided that I should return to Gerusi to fix up Antranik's affairs while S—— remained in Shusha; so, accompanied by Antranik's doctor, my orderly and a convoy of mules carrying sacks to transport grain for the refugees on their journey to Nakichevan, we set off in the snow. A few shots were fired at us soon after leaving Shusha, but otherwise everything was quiet. I was determined to reach Gerusi that night, so we pushed on without stopping, and eventu-

ally arrived there at 1.30 A.M. in the morning, fifty-five miles in sixteen hours. The last part was bitterly cold, and falling off my pony twice in the dark into deep snow did not make the journey any more enjoyable.

Antranik came round early in the morning. I told him the situation as far as I knew it, and asked him to complete his arrangements for the move of the refugees. From other sources it was reported that fighting between Mussulmans and Armenians was still going on, farther south in the neighbourhood of Ghapan.

D——, who had represented us during my absence, returned to Shusha in the afternoon.

A member of the Azerbaijan Parliament in Baku, who came to me in Shusha with a host of complaints against the Zangezeur Armenians and Antranik, and asked for my protection in Zangezeur, arrived on the 4th. He complained that nobody had come to see him, so I pointed out to him that, as he had come at his own request, and not mine, I was not responsible for his reception beyond guaranteeing his safety. However, both Antranik and the Armenian National Council agreed to see him, and I was present at his interview with Antranik. The general was scrupulously polite to him, answered his questions and accusations quietly, and in turn pointed out that, although the Armistice was signed, the Mussulmans had blocked the road between the Armenians of Gerusi and those of Ghapan, and were in this way preventing the grain there from being brought over to feed the starving refugees. Later on the Tartar asked me to visit the Tartar villages in the Zangelan area, so I arranged to meet representatives of all the villages in that area on the 7th.

We started early, with two Armenian representatives, for the meeting with the Mussulmans. We took the upper road, and on approaching the village were fired at. However, we eventually got in, and found that the meeting was being held at Tamur-Muskanli, about six versts farther on. The Chief of the district, the member of Parliament, and about a hundred men, were waiting our arrival. The usual accusations against the Armenians—of attacking peaceful Mussulman villages—were made, and a messenger arrived opportunely from a Tartar village about 20 versts away, saying that the Armenians, led by Antranik's cavalry, were attacking the village, and asking for help. To cut a long story short, the Armenians with me agreed to go on with two Mussulmans to the village and hold an inquiry. They returned to Gerusi later with a statement, signed by both sides, that there had been no fighting at the village at all.

Before returning, I ordered the road from Gerusi to Ghapan to be opened for traffic, in order to get grain through for the refugees. The Mussulmans

swore that the road had never been closed, but, as I had been fired at on it only that morning, I disagreed. They tried to excuse themselves on the ground that the shots fired were only signal shots, but were unable to explain why signal shots should be aimed at our heads.

On the return journey our Tartar escort complained that the member of Parliament was bringing pressure to bear, to make them boycott neighbouring Armenian villages with whom they were friendly, and threatening punishment to all who were caught trading with Armenians.

During my absence in Shusha Antranik had written to the Khans of Nakichevan saying that, as the war was now over, he proposed to take the refugees back to their homes and that a British officer would accompany him. The reply of the Khans asked for delay in the repatriation of the refugees, threatened armed resistance if any armed men accompanied them, and invited the British representative with him to go to Nakichevan and discuss the question with them and a deputation, which apparently had gone to Erivan on the same business, and was expected back at once. Neither Antranik nor I liked the tone of the letter, so I told him I would start for Nakichevan on the 8th, and see what could be done, as he must not fight his way into territory occupied by Mussulmans.

I sent a letter to the Khans saying that I should start for Nakichevan on the 8th to see them. Still no news from Shusha.

Accompanied by Antranik's doctor and two of his men, I started for Nakichevan. Antranik and most of the population saw us off, and I promised to try to be back within the week.

The day's ride took us to Karakelise. The road, or track, passes over a countryside absolutely barren and desolate. On the upper slopes the stone and grass shelters, made last summer by the refugees from Turkish Armenia and Nakichevan, were still visible. The survivors of these refugees had been housed in cattle-sheds and outhouses in villages in the valleys since the snows began to fall. At one time between thirty and forty thousand refugees were camped out on the hillsides, but about a quarter of these had died of famine, exposure, and disease. Karakelise lies in the valley of the Bazar-Chai. We were met by Antranik's secretary, who was engaged in famine relief work. The village, in addition to housing refugees, had also a hospital and orphanage for the children of Armenians massacred by the Turks. They were much better organised than in Gerusi, and I discovered that the reason for this was that in Gerusi the National Council were responsible for administration, whereas in Karakelise Antranik controlled them himself.

We crossed the pass beyond

which lies the road to Nakichevan. The snow was everywhere several feet deep, and the ordinary road impassable for horses. However, one of Antranik's officers from Karakelise, who knew the district and had been ordered to accompany us, said he would take us over the pass to Gumri by a mountain track. We halted at the last village before the pass for an hour, and spoke to the priest and some of the people. The situation of the refugees was getting more critical every day—only the organisation of the food supply by Antranik had prevented the greater part from dying of starvation. They were cheered to hear we were on our way to arrange for their repatriation, and called down blessings on the British.

After leaving the village we commenced the climb to the top, which is over 10,000 feet. Not a tree or living creature broke the view of unending snow till we were more than half-way up, when we met the Commissar of Gumri and an escort of militiamen, who had come to take us over the pass. So, in single file, we plodded silently on. At one spot we passed the remains of a party, which had been caught in one of the storms which suddenly spring up in the mountains, and had perished in the snow. About three o'clock we reached the top, and, turning a sudden corner, were faced by a wonderful prospect. Brilliant sunshine on every side covered the huge snow-clad mountains, and cast all the colours of the rainbow on the distant peaks. Far below us in the valley rolling clouds gave the impression of a vast sea, while across the Arax on the far shore rose the twin-peaked mountain. "Ararat!" I cried, and, turning to the doctor, said, "Now at last I am truly of the Armenians, for I have seen your sacred mountain."

He denied that it was Ararat, but I was right, and one more illusion was shattered. An Armenian patriot who knew not Ararat!

However, even Ararat was soon forgotten, for a storm was obviously brewing, and we came to a narrow ledge which even the sure-footed ponies did not seem to relish crossing. So, leading them, we crawled across on hands and knees. Finally a steep descent into the clouds brought us into falling snow, and a pitch-dark night in the village of Gumri. I found by chance that my letter to the Khans of Nakichevan had only just been sent on, as the Armenians were so afraid to carry it across to the Mussulman village of Kulani that no one had ventured till that morning.

I soon understood the Armenian reluctance to carry messages to the Mussulmans, for we had the greatest difficulty in approaching Kulani. No sooner were we in sight of the village than a picquet on the hill guarding the ford across the river fired a warning shot. There followed an hour's parleying across the ravine before they allowed us

to meet them by the river bed. There I was introduced to the Pristav of the village as the British representative, and from there, escorted by a band of armed peasants, we were conducted to the village.

We had already lost so much time that I had given up all hope of reaching Nakichevan that night, but with the object of pushing on as far as possible I informed the Pristav that we wished a couple of his men to relay us as far as Shahpuz, which was the next large village, and about 8 versts away. Eventually, after considerable delay, two were produced, and we started off. About three versts down the valley the road was covered by an Armenian picquet on the opposite hills, and further delay was caused by our having to explain our identity to them by mountain calls. Meanwhile our guides deserted, leaving us to continue the journey alone. A mile from Shahpuz a Mussulman picquet in front opened fire, so we dismounted, and, leaving the other three behind, the doctor and I, leading our ponies, went forward and got within about six hundred yards of the picquet. Once more they opened fire, the bullets throwing up the dust all round us. Almost immediately firing started from both flanks as well, and I realised that we were trapped. In less time than it takes to write, we were on our horses, galloping for dear life back along the road to the rest of the party, and followed by a hail of bullets. My thoughts on the way took the form of curses on Armenians and Mussulmans alike for landing me in a hole like this, three months after the armistice, with every chance of a bullet in the back; but we managed to rejoin the rest of the party, who had taken cover behind a bank, without being hit. Here we held a council of war, and decided that there was nothing for it but to return to Kulani.

On arrival, the villagers were full of excuses for having left us, and protested that they were afraid of being attacked by the Armenians on the hills. I found out then that they had never sent my letter on, so I told them that I would return to Gumri, and wait there till the Khans sent an escort to take me through to Nakichevan. The villagers, however, refused to let us go, and I then discovered that they suspected me of being an Armenian spy in disguise, and were contemplating getting rid of us in the usual Caucasian manner. However, eventually they agreed to send a message with a letter from me to the Khan of Shahpuz, in which I ordered him to come and escort me out. One of my party, the officer, was allowed to return to Gumri to warn the Armenians not to fire at parties on the road, and another accompanied their messenger to Shahpuz, leaving the doctor, myself, and one of the orderlies prisoners in the village. For two days we remained as their compulsory guests, nor did either of our messengers return.

However, the villager in

whose house we were detained provided us with bread and eggs; we in return gave him and his friends tea and sugar, and we soon became friends. The house consisted of one large room, with a sunken fireplace in the middle covered over with a low table, round which we sat all day, with our legs tucked underneath for warmth. There was a raised platform at one end to sleep on, but it was so cold that we preferred the floor.

In the evenings the male population of the village, all armed with modern rifles, came in to see us and discuss war and politics. It transpired that they could not believe at first that I was an Englishman, because I came alone. Apparently they expected that when the English did arrive, they would come with at least a regiment of cavalry and destroy their village. They are weary of the present anarchy, dislike the rule of the Khans intensely, and would welcome back the Russians, who at least made life secure. They said that they wished to live at peace with the Armenians, and would let the refugees back, provided none of them were armed. The question of arms was the great problem. The Armenians would not, and could not, come back unarmed, unless they were guaranteed protection against the armed Mussulmans. The unarmed Armenians in Nakichevan were massacred by the Mussulmans last year, and nothing but the presence of British troops could prevent a similar massacre again, if the refugees returned unarmed. I told them the true story of the defeat of Turkey — how the British were trying to restore peace and prosperity to this country, how we were not at war with the Mussulmans but only with Turkey, and how many thousands of Mussulmans were in our army and had helped to beat the Turks. We talked of Mesopotamia and its holy cities, and I found that one of the audience had been to Nejf, which I had left only six months before. The villagers were much interested, and when finally, after two days, the escort arrived from Shahpuz, about a dozen of them decided to come with us to Nakichevan. The Khan sent his excuses for not coming himself, but sent his second in command. The villagers, who obviously despised him, said he was too frightened to come along the road.

We reached Shahpuz without incident, except for a few shots fired at us at long range from a distant picquet. The Khan, a tall, thin, young man, was formerly an officer in the Russian army. He now commanded the detachment guarding the road to Nakichevan from possible attacks by the Armenians of Zangezeur. After apologising for our treatment, he announced his intention of accompanying us to Nakichevan, so, after a wash and shave, we started off. On the road, he complained bitterly of the state of the country, and par-

ticularly of his exile in such an accursed spot. Evidently he was sighing for the flesh-pots of Tiflis in pre-war times. The snow, which was falling lightly when we left Shahpuz, came down heavily during the afternoon. The Armenian villages along the road have all been destroyed. By the time we arrived in Nakichevan, it was quite dark, and our party passed silently along the deserted streets in deep snow.

We were led to the house of one of the principal Khans, and without further ceremony I was ushered into a large reception-room full of people, mostly in uniform. We had arrived within half an hour of the returning deputation from Erivan, which was mentioned in the Khan's letter to Antranik. The situation of affairs in Nakichevan was certainly complicated. When the Armenian Republic of Erivan was at war with Georgia after the withdrawal of the Turks, the Mussulmans of Nakichevan, who now called themselves the Republic of Arax, attacked the southern borders of Erivan, and the usual slaughter occurred. After peace was signed with Georgia, the Armenians of Erivan, partly in search of food and partly with the object of repatriating their refugees, attacked the Mussulmans, and were well on their way to Nakichevan with the inevitable reprisals, when an appeal to the Shah's representative at Tabriz produced from Persia two representatives of the Shah, Armenians, of whom one was a priest, and they, together with two Mussulmans from Nakichevan proceeded to Erivan, and there tried to arrange peace terms. Apparently they discussed matters for a week without coming to any definite conclusions. At any rate nothing was put in writing. They had now returned with two more Armenians from Erivan, and were all on their way back to Tabriz. Of these events I had previously heard nothing, nor could I find out where the nearest British troops were. They were known to be in Tiflis; a British officer had been seen at Alexandropol, and a French officer had been in Erivan, but he had since left. My job was to get Antranik's refugees back to Nakichevan, and here was a situation that entirely altered the whole problem, and concerning which I had absolutely no previous knowledge or instructions. However, a British officer in Eastern parts soon gets accustomed to strange situations, so after tea the Persians, Mussulmans, and Armenians were interviewed in turn. The Khans said they were prepared to let Antranik's refugees in, on the condition that they came without arms, but would like me to see a deputation from the Mussulman Council before I held a joint conference of all parties next morning. Every party expressed their desire for British troops to keep order. An excellent dinner followed, to which I

was quite prepared to do justice. Bed at 2 A.M.

The representatives of the Mussulman Council were due at 10 A.M., but, as they had not arrived at 1 P.M., I sent them a message to say that if they did not come at once I would settle the matter without them. This had the desired effect, as they appeared immediately and produced the usual complaints of what the Armenians had done, and hot-air statements of what they were going to do to the Armenians.

From the whole conversation four conclusions were obvious. The Khans were frightened of the ignorant Mussulmans and their agitators, both Turks and Mullahs, and were prepared to humour their passions to keep their own positions; the Mussulmans were frightened of Armenian reprisals and would allow no armed Armenians in the Mussulman area; unarmed Armenians would be massacred unless British troops were present; and all parties would like to see British troops in Nakichevan to save them from anarchy.

After dinner we held a joint conference of the Persians, Mussulmans, and Armenians. To avoid hours of fruitless discussion, I laid down three general principles which were to be carried out as an Allies' order: (1) no war, (2) no forward movement of troops beyond their present front lines on either side, (3) no refugees to return until the British arrived. The other points agreed to after much discussion were: (1) the roads from Nakichevan to Erivan and Zangezeur were to be opened for trade, (2) Nakichevan was to sell grain to Erivan, and (3) the railway to Erivan was to be opened for traffic as soon as British control was available. Finally, after mixed threats and persuasion, an agreement was made by the Mussulmans to deliver at once 10,000 poods of grain, at 50 roubles a pood, to the Armenians of Erivan, as their need was even greater than Antranik's. This arrangement seemed to me the only one possible under the circumstances, but it was hard that the Zangezeur Armenians, who were trying to keep the rules, should suffer because the Turks were not playing the game.

As every statement, and the final agreement, had to be translated into Persian, English, Russian, Tartar, and Armenian, and signed by all, the proceedings were exhausting, but we finally got to bed at 2.30 A.M.

It was necessary for me to go on to get in touch with the nearest British troops, so I sent a message back to Antranik and prepared to start for Erivan at 8 A.M. It was only at 2 P.M., after much abuse of the local authorities, that we finally set out. In the first place, the Mussulman parliament were determined to see me, and, willy-nilly, I was driven round to the Council House to see them and address them. After another delay for lunch at our

host's house, we were finally driven to the station. The train prepared to take us to the boundary was driven by the one engine owned by the Arax republic, and as they had no oil, wooden railway sleepers were used for fuel. In addition to the doctor and myself, there were about 200 recruits proceeding to the front, and K——, one of the leading Khans of Nakichevan, a former Russian cavalry officer, who accompanied us to see us safely over the border.

The train took us to Bash-Nurashan, stopping on the way at Shachtachti, the junction of the Russian military railway into Turkey, where the troops looted the station for firewood. We stayed the night with the army commander. His artillery officer was a young Beok, who had apparently served in the Russian army and also with the Turks. During our first occupation of Baku last August, he was in Baku and made the acquaintance of some of our staff. He said he was bored with his present job, and would like to join any force we might be sending against the Bolsheviks, as a volunteer. Altogether a versatile young man.

I arranged to start for the last part of the journey through Mussulman territory by phaeton at 8 A.M., but at 7.30 a Russian colonel and his wife, who was obviously the better half, arrived and asked to see the British officer. The lady spoke excellent French, and explained that she had heard that a British officer was in the village, and had driven in from her estate to claim the protection of the Allies. It appeared that she owned large estates in the district, and that a local Khan who had since gone to Nakichevan attempted to force her to go to Nakichevan, no doubt in order to seize her estates. I wrote her a protection certificate, and they departed rejoicing.

Between Bash-Nurashan and Sadarak, the last Mussulman village, we passed many unburied or partially buried Armenian corpses, probably captured soldiers who had been murdered offhand, as they were all males. At Sadarak we were met by a large crowd of excited Mussulmans. The immediate cause of the demonstration was that refugees were beginning to arrive from villages that had been sacked by Erivan troops, and they feared that they would presently share the same fate. They had heard, too, that Antranik was also on the war-path, and as he had had two British officers with him when he was last in the Nakichevan area, they took me for one of them. I am bound to confess that I was glad K—— Khan was with us, as I doubt if we should easily have got out of the place without his aid. I hope some day to meet the two British officers referred to above, and tell them of the keen interest that the Mussulmans of Sadarak still take in their welfare.

The front line was on a low range of hills running down to the Arax, about a mile in front of the village. The hills had been trenched, and the

trenches were manned with Mussulmans who had obviously been told to stand on the skyline all the way along for my benefit, so that I might be impressed with their strength. As they had put all their men in the front line, and the position could easily be turned from the hills, it had the opposite effect. The trenches themselves were well dug on the Turkish model. The only gun visible was a dummy. Here K—— left us. No Man's Land was about two miles across. We bumped into the first Armenian picquet without being aware of its presence till we were right on it. Close search revealed one other picquet, well placed on the rising ground about a mile to the east, but no other troops were visible. These men gave one the impression of being soldiers, much more than the Mussulmans we had just left.

We found Colonel D—— commanding the troops at Devalu, where an armoured train was waiting to take us to Erivan. The train was captured from the Georgians in the recent fighting, and its present commander was very proud of it.

On arrival at Erivan we were met by the Town Commandant, a representative of the Minister for War, and an escort of cavalry. The British had not yet arrived in Erivan, but they were expected daily. However, the Armenians had a wireless station; so I sent a message to Baku that I was in Erivan, and proceeding to Tiflis. Another 2 A.M. bed, after an excellent supper washed down with Erivan wine—the best I had tasted in Caucasia.

The Erivan Government very kindly offered to lend me their state train to get through to Tiflis, starting at 8 P.M. I strolled through the town in the morning. It was not unlike an English market town, though very overcrowded with refugees, for the most part destitute. Walnuts were being sold in the street at four for a rouble, which is nominally worth two shillings. In an interview with the Minister-President I explained what I had done in Nakichevan. He was sceptical as to the good faith of the Mussulmans. So was I, but I did not tell him so. The British troops had not arrived when we left.

In the early hours of the morning we drew up alongside a train containing British troops. They proved to be Captain L——, with a platoon of the ——, who had been despatched from Tiflis to find out what was going on in Nakichevan. Over a whisky-and-soda — a thing I hadn't seen for weeks—I was able to tell him what to expect, and learnt in turn the disposition of the British troops in Caucasia. The —th Division, who landed at Batoum, were now in Tiflis, which was British H.Q. and in communication with Baku. The nearest British troops were in Kars.

Our train broke down about thirty versts from Alexandro-

pol, and waited there till a trainload of refugees from Erivan for Kars picked us up. Their condition was appalling —open trucks, snow, and practically no food or clothing. As we had run out of water, we had to shovel snow in and melt it till we had sufficient water to get the engine going again. As it was getting dark we reached Alexandropol, where I met Colonel L——, ex-Russian army, who was full of news of trouble at Kars owing to Turkish intrigue. Alexandropol station was full of refugees in desperate plight, without food or shelter, and unable to get on to their homes at Kars.

We left Alexandropol in the early morning, but, on reaching the neutral zone between Erivan and Georgia, were unable to proceed beyond the last Armenian station. Our Armenian engine-driver refused to take either himself or his engine into Georgia. A long delay seemed inevitable, as there was no telegraph station, when a British medical officer arrived on an engine from the Georgian end. He happened to be visiting the posts in the neutral zone occupied by British troops, and had come on to the Armenian station. We hooked on to him, and he took us through to Georgia. At 9 P.M. we reached Tiflis, where I found a hospitable welcome with the —th Brigade.

The Army Commander from Constantinople, and the G.O.C., Baku, both arrived in Tiflis in the morning; so, as it was no place for small fry like myself, as soon as I had reported my doings and received instructions, I arranged to return by train to Evlack, and thence, on the following day, back to Shusha by car.

The relations between Musulmans and Armenians were if anything more strained than when I left Shusha three weeks before. There was more open disorder in the town. An Armenian officer was shot dead in broad daylight in the Club one day. Typhus was rampant in the town, and three of the British machine-gunners with the L.A.M. cars were victims. The British Mission, because it would not back either Armenian or Tartar, was unpopular with both.

. . . . . .

A week later I went in to Baku to report.

III.

In their mountains the Armenians are a pleasant people — simple, honest, hard-working, and hospitable; in Shusha one comes in contact more with "intelligents" and politicians of a less attractive nature; in Baku the Armenians are seen at their worst. For here they are in a minority, and are divided roughly into two classes — the unskilled workers, mostly in the oil-fields, who are inclined to

Bolshevism, and the wealthy Armenians, whose interests are divided between hatred of the Tartars, fear for the loss of the remnants of their wealth, and a desire to help their more unfortunate countrymen. They have suffered cruelly, without doubt, through the Turkish occupation of Baku; they are bitterly disappointed with us because we have not destroyed the Tartar government of Azerbaijan; and they are determined to get what they can out of us by every means in their power. One cannot blame them,—one can even sympathise with them, knowing the Tartar and his methods; but the knowledge that their misfortunes here are largely due to their own selfishness in the past and their failure to support us, when we tried to help them last year, together with their never-ending complaints, makes dealings with them a mixed pleasure. One longs for the pure atmosphere of the mountains of Zangezeur.

For a month I was in Baku trying to arrange for the relief of the starving population of the whole Azerbaijan area. It was very much a case of making bricks without straw, as the American Relief Commission which was going to take over famine relief had not yet found its way east of Tiflis. Money was hard to get, and except in Baku itself it was not so much money as actual food, clothing, and medical stores that were required. A letter reached me from Antranik in which he said—

"I have to leave Gerusi shortly. My army is unable to prolong its stay. The problem of food, primary to all others, has reached a degree of extreme acuteness. Famine is raging in the Sisian district. Deaths caused by starvation are reported every day, and I have been obliged by the circumstances to share with the hunger-stricken refugees the very limited provision of grain destined to my men. My soldiers are long ago destitute of supplies of the most elementary order: shoes, clothing, meat, sugar, soap, medicine. My means of keeping them are exhausted, and I am no longer able to maintain them even in their present condition, for the local population themselves are in the greatest need.

"My final destination is Erivan, where part, or the whole, of my detachment is to be dismissed or reformed. The only road available to me" (he means without fighting) "is *vid* Sisian, Daralakiaz, and Novo-Byazid. It is almost impracticable at this season of the year, and will necessitate ten days' hard marching under trying conditions. The majority of my men are practically barefooted. Many are now too weak to stand the strain of the journey. There is also the question of transport of supplies of food for my men and horses. I have therefore written to you who are familiar with my situation. . . . I would like to obtain permission and guarantee of passage for me and my forces to the railway line, *vid* Shusha and Evlack. I have written a similar com-

munication to the British Mission."

So once more I was sent off to Antranik to arrange for the passage of his troops to Erivan, *vid* Shusha.

I reached Shusha in the afternoon of February 24. As the arrangements for Antranik's march would take a few days, I sent a message to him to be prepared to move, and on the 26th I tried a trial trip to Abdular by car, to see if the roads were good enough for motors. We only got about twenty versts along the road, as we ran into a party of Armenians who had been attacked by Tartars. Two Armenians were killed and three wounded. We brought the two who were badly wounded back with us to Shusha.

27th. Snowing hard.

28th. Still snowing. The Armenians held a demonstration in front of the British Headquarters, and paraded the naked body of one of the Armenians killed in the affair on the 26th.

March 1. Still snowing. Another demonstration in the street. Some shots were exchanged between the police and the crowd, but there were no casualties.

2nd. Still snowing.

3rd. A fine day at last, so I started for Gerusi with my orderly and Toheraz, a young soldier of Antranik, who came through from Gerusi with a letter. He is a Turkish Armenian, talks good French, and almost perfect English, having been educated in England. He had been responsible for the organisation of the relief of the refugees in one of the outlying districts in Antranik's area. Modest and frank, he was not afraid to state his own opinion, even when he knew it was not mine. I was rather astonished at first when he said that one of the best days in his life was when he killed a large number of Turks with a hatchet, but then he was in Turkey, and had witnessed the massacre of flying Armenian women and children.

The hut at Abdular was as uncomfortable as ever.

In spite of an early start, we did not reach Gerusi till after 9 P.M., as we had to struggle on, on foot, for the last eighteen versts. The snow was too deep for the horses. Antranik looked older, and more tired. He was evidently distressed that we had not yet succeeded in getting supplies out for the refugees.

Antranik refused to go *vid* Shusha and Evlack. He had heard that the Tartars were organising an "incident," to take place when he was in the neighbourhood of Agdam. He also feared that the Armenians in Shusha would try forcibly to prevent his leaving Karabagh, and that in consequence he would be the cause of a disturbance. Finally, as he would be going through Tartar territory, he would be unable to obtain shelter at night for his troops. In that weather, and in their present condition, this would mean many casualties from exposure. He gave me his alternative route to

Erivan, *vid* Sisian and Devalu. The refugees were now reduced to 23,000, and his troops to 1350. He doubted if he would be able to prevent the refugees, who looked to him as their only hope of safety, from following him. This complicated matters seriously, so I told him that he must not let them move without orders from headquarters.

I returned to Baku in view of this new development.

IV.

The news that the refugees with Antranik would probably follow him to Erivan was received with consternation by the relief authorities. The Americans in that district, under the leadership of a band of great-hearted missionaries who were formerly in Turkish Armenia, were already hardly able to cope with the appalling conditions there. There were unpleasant rumours of cannibalism in some places. The addition of another 25,000 to the starving population would probably mean death by starvation for all.

So H——, one of my subalterns, started on ahead to inform Antranik that he himself was to be got out together with his troops, but that the refugees must be prevented from following him at all costs.

I arrived at Gerusi by car from Shusha in the afternoon of March 18. The snow had almost entirely melted, except at the summit of the Lysagursk pass, where the cars stuck in a drift, and we had to cut through about 150 yards. H—— only arrived the day before.

Antranik was, if anything, more opposed than ever to the Agdam route. He was equally determined not to desert his refugees without their knowledge and consent. Finally, I proposed to him that I should leave H—— in Sisian to look after the refugees, until the Americans arrived to take over relief work. A meeting of representatives of the refugees from the various districts to discuss the matter was called for the 20th.

At the conference, Antranik explained the whole position, and the proposals made for looking after the refugees after his departure. The representatives answered that while they realised the position themselves, they doubted if they would be able to persuade the great mass of their starving comrades from following Antranik. Apart from the fact that they looked on him as their only hope against death by starvation, there was the further difficulty of the increasing hostility of the local population to the Turkish Armenians. As long as Antranik and his troops saved them from attack by the Tartars, the Russian Armenians received them without complaint; but since the departure of the Turks and of immediate danger, the shortage of food

had extended to the local population too. As a result, the law of self-preservation had produced such a state of affairs that only the presence of Antranik had prevented attempts to turn the refugees out. They were, therefore, afraid that the departure of Antranik would be the signal for an outbreak between the Turkish and Russian Armenians.

My statement that the British officer left in Sisian would protect the refugees, and Antranik's promise to collect, before his departure, a compulsory levy of grain from the local population for the aged and infirm, extracted a promise from them that they would do their best to get the refugees to wait until more food was available in Erivan, or until they could be repatriated to their own homes.

Antranik spent the last two evenings with me. The stories of some of his experiences in war against the Turks for the last thirty years are extraordinarily interesting:—the capture of Bitlis, the retreat from Erzeroum, the fighting around Khoi and Nakichevan, his attempt to join the British at Tabriz and to destroy the bridge at Julfa, and finally his retreat to the mountains of Zangezeur—all form a fascinating picture of an irregular soldier's life on an Eastern front. For two months last year, before the harvest ripened, his army lived on blackberries. He tells some good stories against himself. In the early fighting on the Caucasian front, when the Russian army was still organised, a general order was issued that the intelligence branch desired raids to be made and prisoners brought in, with a view to the identification of the opposing units. As a rule, in fights between Turks and Armenians, no prisoners are taken; but on this occasion Antranik's men took thirteen, who were duly forwarded to Headquarters. Shortly after a telephone message arrived from the G.O.C. "We have just received thirteen prisoners from you. *Is not this a mistake?*"

His views on the mentality of the Turks are interesting. He is quite convinced that the Turk is not yet finished with, and that any appearance of generosity on our part to him will be treated as a sign of weakness. Until Enver and his satellites are taken, and the Committee of Union finally destroyed, there can be no real peace in the near East. His views on the future of Armenia are worth recording. He is opposed to the formation of a greater Armenia stretching from the Mediterranean to the Caspian—"for," as he says, "looking at the question from the point of view of a soldier, owing to the Turkish massacres we have not now sufficient Armenians to defend this scattered country. Moreover, Eastern Transcaucasia, deprived of Tiflis and Baku, is so poor a country that it is not worth cultivating." He would therefore have a smaller Armenia, with Cilicia or Trebizond giving access to the sea, and a hinterland adjoining

the railways and the British sphere of influence in Mesopotamia. In this case, the Russian Armenians would return to restored Armenia and there learn to be true Armenians. He realises the necessity for a mandatory power for at least a generation, to protect the Armenians not only against the Mussulmans but against themselves, for at least a generation must pass before the present blood-feud with the Mussulmans is forgotten.

A farewell dinner to Antranik in the Mayor's house took place on the afternoon of the 22nd. The principal Armenians of the district, including the representative of the Erivan Government who had recently arrived, were present. During the dinner the toast of the Allies was proposed by Antranik. The complaints against the British, among the local Armenians, for supporting the Tartars were becoming more pronounced every day, so I took the opportunity in my reply to draw their attention to what they owed to Antranik. Before the war, all the average Englishman knew of Transcaucasia was that there was oil at Baku, and a railway to Batoum by which to get it out. It was due to Antranik that we had discovered there were Armenians in Zangezeur. Just as we knew very little about the Armenians, so the Armenians knew very little of us. Last year when we first arrived in Baku, some of their newspapers had written articles against us, urging the people not to help us, because we were an Imperial race of tyrants.

This brought Antranik once more to his feet. Taking what I had said as his text, at first quietly, but with ever-increasing earnestness, he began telling them of their faults as a nation. When their one hope of success lay in unity, faction had destroyed their hopes. When danger from without threatened their very existence, they had failed to close their ranks for the common cause. Rich and poor alike had thought of their own gain rather than the good of their nation. The Russian Armenians had failed to succour their martyred brethren in Turkey, and left them to their fate. They had organised too late against the Turks, and in the end had been themselves destroyed. Becoming more impassioned as he spoke, he seemed to lose all consciousness of self and become the inspired prophet, calling on his people to sink their selfish interests and join in one last effort to rebuild the ruins of devastated Armenia. Trust in Britain and the Allies alone would pull them through, but only if they were true to themselves.

No pen could describe him as he spoke. Even on me, who could only gather the general trend of his words, the effect was electrical. His passionate earnestness, his fiery eloquence, the baring of his soul—Armenia was speaking with the voice of Antranik.

Exhausted by his effort, he

sank into his seat. The storm of applause which greeted him proved once more that his supremacy was unchallenged —a carpenter by birth, their uncrowned king.

We left Gerusi about 10 A.M. on the 25th. The start was most impressive. The cavalry were formed up on three sides of a hollow square, with the civil population on the fourth. Antranik galloped on parade, and rode at full speed along the line, finally drawing rein in the middle where the standard-bearers stood, carrying the flags of Great Britain, Russia, and that of his own detachment, presented to him by the ladies of Gerusi. There the city fathers, in the name of the people, thanked him for his services and bade him farewell. Antranik, answering, acknowledged their hospitality, and left them to the protection of the Allies.

The hills echoed to the sound of a volley fired in the air. Then the column, leading off in file, with the three banners in front giving colour to the wintry scene, slowly climbed the steep hill-track to the mountains, and disappeared among the snows. . . .

The usual track to Karakelise was blocked by snow, so we were forced to make a detour, which added a few versts to the day's march. Soon after our arrival the headmen of the Mussulman villages within the Armenian area came to see Antranik. They feared that after his departure the local Armenians would turn on them, but were assured that the British officer would see that they were not molested.

Antranik having gone on to Angelagout, about ten versts, I rode over with H—— to Bernagout to see the refugees there. Their situation was deplorable. They were crowded for the most part in cattle-sheds and outhouses. There was practically no grain, and the money distributed was really of little use, as money had no value. The able-bodied spent their whole day in those places where the snow had melted digging for roots, which they boiled, to keep them alive. Starvation, coupled with lack of clothing and fire, had produced good soil for the ravages of deadly typhus. One room we went into had recently held eighteen; now there were only four survivors, and two of them were sick of typhus.

H—— brought with him from Baku, Sammy, a Syrian boy, who was originally one of the refugees from Lake Urumiah, who escaped into Persia, and were transported by us to the refugee camp at Baqubah near Baghdad. Sammy, who only looked about fifteen years old, attached himself to the regiment last July at Hamadan, and, refusing to go to Baqubah, marched at its head to Baku, and had been with it ever since. Very quick at picking up languages, he talked English quite well, in addition to Russian, Turkish, Armenian, Arabic, and, of course, his own Syrian. Dressed as a British Tommy, he was promoted to the

rank of unofficial interpreter, and fitted the part well. He found a number of compatriots among Antranik's men, and, like all of his kind, took to horse and gun as a duck to water. Antranik also attached to me a Turkish Armenian boy, George by name, to look after the mule which carried my kit. He was well educated, of good family, and extremely good-looking. In astrakhan cap and soldier's coat and sword, he formed a picturesque addition to our party. During the massacres in Turkey he witnessed the rape of his sisters and the subsequent massacre of his whole family. He lives for manhood and revenge.

At Angelagout we attended a meeting of Commissars and representatives of the refugees, summoned by Antranik. The village was a centre of great liveliness, for in addition to the parties from the other villages, many of the refugees from the immediate neighbourhood, clad in rags of Eastern colour, and two or three hundred soldiers, had been drawn to the scene from curiosity. Opposite Antranik's headquarters were lodged his surviving camels, which, under the charge of a merry-faced Persian Mussulman, formed for the onlooker one more link with the East. The Commissars had been summoned to learn the quota of grain required from their respective villages for the support of the refugees, and to receive payment for it at the rate fixed by Antranik. One or two were inclined to protest, but Antranik, who seemed to know to the last grain the supply in each village, seldom altered his decision. The grain had to be delivered at Karakelise and Angelagout in two days, failing which soldiers would be sent to commandeer it. Altogether about 2600 poods (100,000 lb.) were requisitioned for the aged refugees and the orphans. After this business had been completed, Antranik addressed the refugees from the balcony, explaining what he was doing for them, and H—— was introduced to them.

On the 29th some Molokans (Russian colonists) arrived about 5 A.M., wishing to show me the bodies of three of their villagers whom they had found murdered in the hills. Tcheraz, left behind to bring along a consignment of tea and sugar, which Baku had promised to send out for the troops on their march, arrived with his convoy in the evening, much to every one's delight. The men had not tasted tea or sugar for the last nine months.

Time no longer hung heavy on Antranik's hands. With the coming of hard work and the prospect of movement, he was in his best form.

My party went on ahead to Bazar Chai, a Russian (Molokan) village, famous in peace time for its dairy produce. The snow was very late in melting this year. Between here and Kushjibelek, on the other side of the pass, and about 25 versts distant, there was anything from ten to fifteen feet of snow. Owing to thaw it would not bear the weight of horses, and pro-

gress was impossible. However, Antranik set the whole population to work at both ends to cut a passage, and declared he would get through in two days' time. Madame S——, the doctor's wife, who accompanied us, was nearly engulfed in a marsh covered with snow, but she was eventually rescued. We were so late in arriving that the villagers had given up expecting us, and were full of apologies for not having escorted us in, or received us with bread and salt.

In the morning the elders of the village came to see me. They were much concerned about the future, as the nomad Kurds and Tartars, who every summer visit the mountain pastures, were due to arrive in about a month's time. Only the presence of Antranik last year saved their lives, and they feared that this year, without his aid, they would not be strong enough to defend themselves. The Molokans are an interesting religious sect. They form village communities, in which every male adult has a voice in the government. No action, however small, can be taken without the consent of the whole community. Formerly they were teetotallers, and refused to carry arms, but now many of the younger generation drink, and to a man they are armed to the teeth. Mounted on their ponies, with their fair hair, ruddy faces, and long flowing beards, they remind one of the old type of Scottish crofter.

Antranik arrived in the afternoon, and rode in, preceded by the Russians riding four abreast, and singing folk-songs in harmony, which added to the picturesqueness of the scene.

V.

With the first streak of dawn on April 4, we were up and packing our kits. The infantry had already moved off. The Russians, singing, accompanied us as far as the start of the cutting through the snow and there bade Antranik good-bye. The sun, breaking through the clouds, shone on our banners, unfurled and leading the way. The infantry could still be seen in front, a long snake-like column threading its way through the waist-high snow, gradually disappearing where the snow banks rose to a man's height.

A few versts from the top, at the boundary between Sisian and Daralakiaz, the track crosses the Bazar Chai. Here it was necessary to build up a passage for the horses and transports. The snow was cut down to form a ramp, and stones were collected from the icy water to form a shallow ford. Antranik himself took his share in the work, and by force of his example and energy the obstacle was eventually overcome. By this time the

melting snow and the river water were beginning to tell their tale, and men, singly and in twos or threes, could be seen trying to restore circulation to their shoeless feet. Soon after crossing the ridge, rain began to fall. The narrow defile, already choked with slush, rapidly filled with a river of half-frozen mud. The horses, submerged to their bellies, stumbled wearily forward. Halts were continually being caused by some tired animal lying down, too exhausted to go farther.

It was late afternoon before the head of the column reached Kushjibelek. Our entry into Erivan territory, though undignified, was not without incident. As I learnt afterwards, the Commissar of the village had been guilty, during the winter, of acts of dishonesty and cruelty to prisoners of war returning from Austria to their homes in Sisian. The snows of winter had prevented the long arm of Antranik from reaching the offender, but to-day at the entrance to the village they stood face to face. Antranik, ever the champion of the weak against the strong, with bare fists, so furiously that his own hands were covered with blood, rained blows upon him. Thus punished, he was cast into his own prison, to remain there till the column moved on.

Some of the baggage animals were reported to be in difficulty on the mountain, so Antranik ordered the drivers to abandon their loads and bring the animals in as best they could, trusting to send back and recover as much as possible.

The 5th was a day of ever-changing scenery. We started late, as arrangements had first to be made for the recovery of the stores left on the mountain. The casualties, so far as was known, were fourteen pack-horses and two camels. All the troops got over—a wonderful performance.

Just as we started it commenced snowing. Crossing the river, George, with his mule, slipped and took a "header" into the water. He looked more like a drowned rat than anything else when he reached the other bank, but he gallantly saved my kit.

We soon started the descent; the snow turned to rain, and the sun broke through the clouds. Just at that moment we topped a ridge and looked down on a rocky winding valley flanked by precipitous slopes, varying from a thousand to two thousand feet high. A vision of "Caledonia, stern and wild," rose before my eyes. Green, brown, russet, purple, varying shades of blue —thickly wooded slopes of juniper and ash—topped by snow-clad peaks, the whole bounded by rolling clouds of mist, stretched as far as eye could see.

We halted for an hour at Herher, a village which was practically destroyed by the Mussulmans, but had now been reoccupied by the Armenians. They were very short of food, and had no seed grain to sow

for this year's crop. No help had yet reached them from Erivan. Later in the afternoon we reached Malishka. Antranik stayed here last year on his way to Khoï. It lies at the foot of a valley, and one comes on it almost unawares. We halted out of sight until the column had closed up. Then, with banners flying, firing of rifles, and discharging of bombs, we advanced over the brow of the hill. Below us lay green fields and fruit trees covered with blossom, spring once more! The commander of the local troops, with a mounted escort, came out to meet the General, and together we rode into the village. Altogether it was a wonderful day, marred only by the tales told in the evening of the terrible distress between here and Erivan.

Next morning we only moved on about eight versts to Keshishkend, as the transport animals were absolutely exhausted and required at least a day's rest. Soon after our arrival, Antranik told me that a large company of refugees were waiting in the courtyard, and that he would like me to see them and speak to them. The verandah in front of the house looked down on a large courtyard, flanked by a low wall, and was full of men, women, and children, mostly in the last stages of famine. Three old men taken at random were appointed to speak for them. The first, a native of Erzeroum, said that, after its fall he and his family had escaped to the mountains. Except for his wife, all were now dead, and here, left alone, they were without money and without food. The second, with tears in his eyes, and scarcely able to stand from weakness, told of the death of his children by starvation. The third, who was a native of one of the villages of Nakichevan, pointing to the neighbouring hills, said: "From those hills many of us can see our homes occupied by Mussulmans who are living on our grain. Give us back our homes, for here we must slowly die." The spectacle was heartrending. The seal of death was already on many of the faces. Mothers, frantic for the babes they could no longer suckle, children, dull-witted and little more than skeletons covered with skin, men and women too weak to do other than wait for death. With arms raised in supplication, they pleaded to us—"Save us, or we perish."

There are those who sit at home and say: "The Turks have been misled by the Germans. They are really a brave, honourable race, more sinned against than sinning." Would they could see, if only for five minutes, the damnable works the Turks have done, *and are doing still*. By a process more deadly and more sure, they are completing the task of destroying the remnants of the Armenian race that they have failed to destroy by massacre.

At the midday meal, Antranik refused to eat or

drink, and was silent all afternoon. Later, with a view to helping these people, I asked him what supplies he could leave behind, if I guaranteed to get food sent to Devalu for his men, to meet him on arrival there. Unable to contain himself longer, he burst out: "Go to the British, and tell them that from this day I wash my hands of all dealings with the Allies. What money I have received from them I will pay back by the sale of my horses at Erivan. You have told us to cease fighting, and await the settlement of the Peace Conference for the righting of our wrongs. Trusting in you, we have kept the peace to our own hurt, and waited patiently for our salvation. You say that we are to have an Armenia independent of the Turks. Soon there will be no Armenians left to populate it. You refuse to let us die fighting for our country and our lives, and condemn us to a death of shame by starvation. Thus far I have been loyal to you. I can bear it no longer. I shall go to Echmiadzin as I promised you. On arrival there I shall take what steps I think right for the good of my people. If you tell me — aye, even if God should tell me that here is justice to my people, I will deny it in His presence."

I had previously arranged with him to push on to Devalu, the nearest point on the Erivan-Tabriz railway where there was a British post, to arrange for railway transport for his men to Echmiadzin. The new situation made it doubly important to get on as quickly as possible, so in the morning I started with Toheraz and my orderly for the railway line and Erivan.

I shared a room with Antranik. He passed the night in alternate fits of excitement and depression. In the morning I asked him once more if he would not wait till he had spoken with British H.Q. before making up his mind, but he would only answer, "I am going to Echmiadzin to do what I think best for my people."

It was raining when we set out. Our horses were tired and in poor condition. As a result progress was slow, and by nightfall we only reached Tchanakji, although we were travelling very light. Throughout the day we had been passing through villages to which the Armenians had only recently returned. The villages had all been destroyed, and the inhabitants were in a pitiable state. We eventually found a house in Tchanakji with a roof. Our host told us more of the appalling conditions throughout the country. There was no food here at all.

Before starting I spoke to the villagers who had collected outside our hut. It was a dreadful sight. Scenes such as at Teshisakend were repeated. Unless the villagers could get seed grain in the next three weeks they were faced with slow but certain death.

It rained in torrents all morning. By midday, owing to the state of the roads and the exhaustion of the horses, we had only made a few versts. On arrival at one of the many ruined villages, we were told that at Karahatch, about three versts off the road, we should find a detachment of Armenian cavalry who would probably lend us fresh horses. As our supply of food was practically exhausted, we decided to go there rather than attempt to push on with our present mounts. The detachment was at Karahatch, but they had no horses fit to travel. However, they gave us a bread meal from a hidden store they discovered on returning to the village.

It was getting dark when we reached Zingerlu, where we lodged in the Commissar's one-roomed house. One of his children, a girl of about ten years of age, was sick of fever —typhus, I expect—and did not look as if she would last long. We gave her tea and aspirin, the only things we had left, and Toheraz nursed her like a mother. Here, too, the villagers were in the last stages of despair. "Send us seed grain, or we die."

Tired after the day's journey, I had just got off to sleep when I was wakened by a furious burst of rifle-fire just outside the hut, followed by our host's appearance, with the news that the Mussulmans were attacking Kadilu, a village four or five versts away across the valley. On going out, we found the villagers firing their rifles in the direction of the Mussulmans' line of advance. Toheraz, taking command, soon stopped them and pointed out the futility of wasting their ammunition. Finally, after posting picquets, the remainder returned to the village. Heavy firing continued across the valley for about an hour, but gradually died down, and morning broke without further disturbance in our village.

We did not wait for a report from Kadilu, as there was no direct road there, but pushed on with a party of refugees and villagers making their way to Devalu. The track was disturbed by Mussulmans from the Nakichevan area, who lay in wait for small parties of Armenians. About a fortnight before an unarmed party of about twenty were killed and mutilated in the foothills. We passed the bodies of two or three murdered travellers, but reached Devalu ourselves without incident, and from there continued our journey to Erivan by train.

At Erivan, after visiting the British Mission, a Headquarters without troops, and the American Relief Headquarters, I started for Tiflis by train, leaving Toheraz behind. *There was no hope of getting seed grain out to the Armenian villages in the mountains in time for this year's sowing.* The greater part of them cannot now survive next winter.

. . . . . .

The next fortnight was spent going to and fro between Tiflis and Echmiadzin, the cathedral town near Erivan where the Katholikos of Armenia lives.

Antranik arrived at Echmiadzin with his troops on the 13th, and in conjunction with us made preparations for disbanding. Those who came from Constantinople, Bulgaria, and Syria were to be repatriated as soon as possible; the majority of the rest would probably in the end join the Erivan army.

The feeling between the Turkish and Russian Armenians is very strong. The Turkish Armenians are sore with the Russian for having left them to their fate, and thereby caused the massacre of many of their families. The Russian Armenians, on the other hand, blame the Turkish for having carried on the struggle, and brought reprisals on themselves who were at the mercy of the Turks. All Armenians, however, recognise the authority of the Katholikos, who, to the Armenian race throughout the world, is the visible head of their national aspirations. The present occupant of the papal throne is a fine-looking, venerable old man, living in a monastic atmosphere that carries one back to the Middle Ages. The monastic clergy, unlike the parish priests, are highly educated men, with the manners and outlook of educated Western Europe.

The last two days were interesting but rather pathetic. The sale of the horses to the Erivan Government reminded one of a great horse fair in Scotland, but only a soldier knows what it means to part with the horse that has campaigned with him. The men were paid 250 roubles each (present value about £2) for their services. Having been disarmed and demobilised, I found them all paraded outside Antranik's headquarters to bid me good-bye. I could not help comparing in my mind the future of these men, who like myself fought the whole war against the Turks, with my own. Toheraz was down with typhus, caught no doubt at the Commissar's hut in Zingerlu.

On April 27 Antranik, accompanied by about fifteen of his officers and staff, left Echmiadzin with me by special train for Tiflis. The news of his journey travelled before him. At every station crowds were waiting to get a glimpse of their national hero, but Antranik, whether from sadness of heart or desire to avoid a demonstration, did not show himself.

On reaching the Georgian frontier, I had the arms of his escort collected in a small *coupé*, and posted the four British soldiers with us as sentries over the train, to prevent the Georgians searching it. Antranik, while accepting my decision, was evidently not quite satisfied with my method of dealing with the situation. On arrival at the first Georgian station, he showed me a telegram which he was about to send to the Georgian Government. It ran somewhat as follows:—

"Pursued by my enemies I come to revisit your beautiful city. The memory of our cordial relations in the past prompts me to believe that we

shall meet once again with renewed cordiality. I am bringing with me an armed escort of my officers."

At Tiflis, the Georgian Minister of War sent a representative to the station to welcome him, offering him his car, and assuring him that any armed escort brought by Antranik would be welcomed by them. Antranik informed me of the message with a smile, but left the arms where they were.

. . . . . .

A fortnight later, a British transport, crowded with officers and men returning home to friends and country, sailed from the port of Batoum. On a corner of the deck was a small group of officers dressed in picturesque foreign uniforms, and talking an unknown foreign tongue. For the rest of the travellers, this was the day long dreamed of in the years of exile, while fighting in foreign lands. But for these it was no homecoming. For these the pageants of victory and peace have no meaning. Exiles, their vision is one of blackened homes and murdered kin. Strangers among those with whom they had fought the common enemy, they were sailing westward to plead their people's cause in the metropolis of words. What of the Great Powers? The cry of a martyred nation goes out to the English-speaking peoples.

Will they hear the call?

LIAISON.

SIMON.

BY J. STORER CLOUSTON.

XXVII. FLIGHT.

On the morning after his visit from Mr Carrington, Ned Cromarty took his keeper with him and drove over to shoot on a friend's estate. He stayed for tea, and it was well after five o'clock and quite dark when he started on his long drive home. The road passed close to a wayside station with a level crossing over the line, and when they came to this the gates were closed against them and the light of the signal on the up line had changed from red to white.

"Train's up to time," said Ned to the keeper. "I thought we'd have got through before she came."

There was no moon, a fine rain hung in the air, and the night was already pitch dark. Sitting there in the dogcart before the closed gates, behind the blinding light of the gig lamps, they were quite invisible themselves; but about thirty yards to their left they saw the station platform plainly in the radiance of its lights, and straight before them, in the radiance of their own, they could see less distinctly the road beyond the line.

At first, save for the distant rumble of the southward-bound train, there was no sign of life or of movement anywhere; and then all at once a figure on a bicycle appeared on the road, and in a moment dismounted beside the station. It was a girl in black, and at the sight of her Ned bent forward suddenly in his driving seat and stared intently into the night. He saw her unstrap a small suit-case from the bicycle and lead the bicycle into the station. A minute or two passed, and then she emerged from the ticket-office on to the platform carrying the suit-case in her hand. The bicycle she had evidently left in the station, and it seemed manifest that she was going by this train.

"That's Miss Farmond, sir, from Keldale House!" exclaimed the keeper.

His master said nothing, but kept his eye intently fixed on the girl. One of the platform lamps lit her plainly, and he thought she looked the most forlorn and moving sight that had ever stirred his heart. There was something shrinking in her attitude, and when she looked once for a few moments straight towards him there seemed to be something both sad and frightened in her face. Not another soul was on the platform, and seen in that patch of light against an immensity of dark empty country and black sky, she give him such an impression of friendlessness that he could scarcely stay in his seat. And

all the while the roar of the on-coming train was growing louder and ever louder. In a few minutes she would be gone —"Where?" he asked himself.

"I'm wondering where she'll be going at this time o' night with nae mair luggage than yon," said the keeper.

That decided it.

"Take the trap home and tell Miss Cromarty not to expect me to-night," said his master quickly. "Say I've gone—oh, anywhere you derned well like! There's something up and I'm going to see what it is."

He jumped quietly on the road just as the engine thundered between the gates in front. By the time the train was at rest he was over the gate and making his way to the platform. He stopped in the darkness by the rear end of the train till he saw the figure in black disappear into a carriage, and then he stepped into a compartment near the guard's van.

"Haven't got a ticket, but I'll pay as I go along," he said to the guard as he passed the window.

The guard knew Mr Cromarty well and touched his cap, and then the train started, and Mr Cromarty was embarked upon what he confessed to himself was the blindest journey he had ever made in all his varied career.

Where was she going—and why was she going? He asked himself these questions over and over again as he sat with a cigar between his teeth and his long legs stretched out on the opposite seat, and the train drove on into an ever wilder and more desolate land. It would be many miles and a couple of hours or more before they reached any sort of conceivable destination for her, and as a matter of fact this train did not go beyond that destination. Then it struck him sharply that up till the end of last month the train had continued its southward journey. The alteration in the time-table was only a few days old. Possibly she was not aware of it and had counted on travelling to — where? He knew where she had got to stop, but where had she meant to stop? Or where would she go to-morrow? And above all, why was she going at all, leaving her bicycle at a wayside station and with her sole luggage a small suit-case? Ned shook his head, tried to suck life into his neglected cigar, and gave up the problem in the meanwhile.

As to the question of what business he had to be following Miss Farmond like this, he troubled his head about it not at all. If she needed him, here he was. If she didn't, he would clear out. But very strong and very urgent was the conviction that she required a friend of some sort.

The stations were few and far between, and most desolate, improbable places as endings for Cicely Farmond's journey. He looked out of the window at each of them, but she never alighted.

"She's going to find herself

stuck for the night. That's about the size of it," he said to himself as they left the last station before the journey ended.

Though their next stop was the final stop, he did not open the carriage door when the train pulled up. He did not even put his head far out of the window, only just enough to see what passed on the platform ahead.

"I'm not going to worry her if she doesn't need me," he said to himself.

He saw a slip of a figure in black talking to the stationmaster, and it was hardly necessary to hear that official's last words in order to divine what had happened.

"Weel, miss," he overheard the stationmaster say, "I'm sorry ye're disappointed, but it's no me that has stoppit the train. It's aff for the winter. If ye turn to the left ye'll fin' the hotel."

The girl looked round her slowly, and it seemed to Ned that the way she did it epitomised disappointment and desolation, and then she hurried through the station buildings and was gone.

He was out of the carriage and after her in an instant. Beyond the station the darkness was intense, and he almost passed a road branching to the left without seeing it. He stopped and was going to turn down it when it struck him the silence was intense that way, but that there was a light sound of retreating footsteps straight ahead.

"She's missed the turning!" he said to himself, and followed the footsteps.

In a little he could see her against the sky, a dim hurrying figure, and his own stride quickened. He had never been in this place before, but he knew it for a mere seaboard village with an utterly lonely country on every inland side. She was heading into a black wilderness, and he took his decision at once and increased his pace till he was overhauling her fast.

At the sound of his footsteps he could see that she glanced over her shoulder and made the more haste till she was almost running. And then as she heard the pursuing steps always nearer she suddenly slackened speed to let him pass.

"Miss Farmond!" said he.

He could hear her gasp as she stopped short and turned sharply. She was staring hard now at the tall figure looming above her.

"It's only me—Ned Cromarty," he said quietly.

And then he started in turn, for instead of showing relief she gave a half-smothered little cry and shrank away from him. For a moment there was dead silence, and then he said, still quietly, though it cost him an effort—

"I only mean to help you if you need a hand. Are you looking for the hotel?"

"Yes," she said in a low frightened voice.

"Well," said he, "I guess you'd walk till morning before you reached an hotel along this road. You missed the

turning at the station. Give me your bag. Come along!"

She let him take the suitcase and she turned back with him, but it struck him painfully that her docility was like that of a frightened animal.

"Where are you bound for?" he inquired in his usual direct way.

She murmured something that he could not catch, and then they fell altogether silent till they had retraced their road to the station, and turned down towards a twinkling light or two which showed where the village lay.

"Now Miss Farmond," said he, "we are getting near this pub, and as we've both got to spend the night there, you'll please observe these few short and simple rules. I'm your uncle — Uncle Ned. D'you see?"

There was no laugh, or even a smile from her. She gave a little start of surprise, and in a very confused voice murmured—

"Yes, I see."

"My full name is Mr Ned Dawkins, and you're Louisa Dawkins my niece. Just call me 'Uncle Ned,' and leave me to do the talking. We are touring this beautiful country, and I've lost my luggage owing to the derned foolishness of the railroad officials here. And then when we've had a little bit of dinner you can tell me, if you like, why you've eloped, and why you've got a down on me. Or if you don't like to, well, you needn't. Ah, here's the pub at last."

He threw open the door, and in a loud and cheerful voice cried—

"Well, here we are, Louisa. Walk right in, my dear!"

XXVIII. THE RETURN.

His friends would scarcely have picked out Mr Ned Cromarty of Stanesland as likely to make a distinguished actor, but they might have changed their opinion had they heard him breezily announce himself as Mr Dawkins from Liverpool, and curse the Scottish railways which had lost his luggage for him. It is true that the landlord looked at him a trifle askance, and that the landlady and her maid exchanged a knowing smile when he ordered a room for his niece Louisa; but few people shut up in a little country inn with such a formidable-looking, loud-voiced giant, would have ventured to question his statements openly, and the equanimity of Mr Dawkins remained undisturbed.

"Sit right down, Louisa!" he commanded when dinner was served; and then, addressing the maid, "You needn't wait. We'll ring when we need you."

But the moment she had gone he checked a strong expression with an effort.

"Dam — confound it!" he cried. "I ought to have re-

membered to say grace! That would have given just the finishing touch to the Uncle Ned business. However, I don't think they've smelt any rats."

Cicely smiled faintly, and then her eyes fell, and she answered nothing. Their only other conversation during dinner consisted in his expostulations on her small appetite and her low-voiced protests that she wasn't hungry. But when it was safely over, he pushed back his chair, crossed his knees, and began—

"Now, Louisa, I'm going to take an uncle's privilege of lighting my pipe before I begin to talk, if you don't mind."

He lit his pipe, and then suddenly dropping the *rôle* of uncle altogether, said gently—

"I don't want to press you with any questions that you don't want to answer, but if you need a friend of any sort, size, or description, here I am." He paused for a moment, and then asked still more gently, "Are you afraid of me?"

For the first time she let her long-lashed eyes rest full on his face, and in her low voice she answered—

"Partly afraid."

"And partly what else?"

"Partly puzzled—and partly ashamed."

"Ashamed!" he exclaimed with a note of indignant protest. "Ashamed of what?"

"The exhibition I've made of myself," she said, her voice still very low.

"Well," he smiled, "that's a matter of opinion. But why are you afraid?"

"Oh," she exclaimed. "You know, of course!"

He stared at her blankly.

"I pass; I can't play to that!" he replied. "I honestly do not know, Miss Farmond."

Her eyes opened very wide.

"That's what I meant when I said I was puzzled. You *must* know—and yet——!"

She broke off and looked at him doubtfully.

"Look here," said he, "some one's got to solve this mystery, and I'll risk a leading question. Why did you run away?"

"Because of what you have been doing!"

"*Me* been doing! And what have I been doing?"

"Suspecting me and setting a detective to watch me!"

Ned's one eye opened wide, but for a moment he said not a word. Then he remarked quietly—

"This is going to be a derned complicated business. Just you begin at the beginning, please, and let's see how things stand. Who told you I was setting a detective on to you?"

"I found out myself I was being watched."

"How and when?"

She hesitated, and the doubtful look returned to her eyes.

"Come, Louisa!" he said. "No nonsense this time! We've got to have this out—or my name's Dawkins!"

For the first time she smiled spontaneously, and the doubtful look almost vanished. Just a trace was left, but her voice,

though still very low, was firmer now.

"I only discovered for the first time the wicked suspicion about poor Malcolm," she said, "when I met a gentleman a few days ago, who told me he had heard Malcolm was arrested for the murder of Sir Reginald."

"But that's not true!" cried Ned.

"No; and he admitted it was only a story he had heard at the hotel, but it suddenly seemed to throw light on several things I hadn't been able to understand. I spoke to Lady Cromarty about it, and then I actually found that I was suspected too!"

"Did she tell you so?"

"Not in so many words, but I knew what was in her mind. And then the very next day I caught the same man examining the library with Bisset, and from a window I saw him follow Lady Cromarty and speak to her, and then I knew he was a detective!"

"How did you know?"

"Oh, by instinct, and I was right! The position was so horrible—so unbearable, that I went in to see Mr Rattar about it."

"Why Rattar?"

"Because he is the family lawyer, and he's also investigating the case, and I thought, of course, he was employing the detective. And Mr Rattar told me you were really employing him. Are you?"

There was a pleading note in this question—a longing to hear the answer "No," that seemed to affect Ned strangely.

"It's all right, Miss Farmond!" he said. "Don't you worry! I got that man down here to clear you—just for that purpose and no other!"

"But——" she exclaimed, "Mr Rattar said you suspected Malcolm and me, and were determined to prove our guilt!"

"Simon Rattar said that!"

There was something so menacing in his voice that Cicely involuntarily shrank back.

"Do you mean to tell me, honour bright, that Simon Rattar told you that lie in so many words?"

"Yes," she said, "he did indeed. And he said that this Mr Carrington was a very clever man, and was almost certain to trump up a very strong case against us, and so he advised me to go away."

He seemed almost incapable of speech at this.

"He actually advised you to bolt?"

She nodded.

"To slip away quietly to London and stay in an hotel he recommended till I heard from him. He said you had sworn to track down the criminals and hang them with your own hands, and so when I saw you suddenly come up behind me in that dark road to-night—oh, you've no idea how terrified I was! Mr Rattar had frightened away all the nerve I ever had, and then when I thought I was safely away,

you suddenly came up behind me in that dark road!"

"You poor little—" he began, laying his hand upon hers; and then he remembered Sir Malcolm, and altered his sentence into "You know now that was all one infernal pack of lies, don't you?"

Though he took away his hand, she had not moved her own, and she gave him now a look which richly rewarded him for his evening's work.

"I believe every word you tell me," she said.

"Well then," said Ned, "I tell you that I got this fellow Carrington down to take up the case, so that I could clear you in the first place and find the right man in the second. So as to give him an absolute clear field, he wasn't told who was employing him, and then he could suspect me myself if he wanted to. As a matter of fact, I rather think he has guessed who's running him. Anyhow, yesterday afternoon he told me straight and emphatically that he knew you were innocent. So you've run away a day too late!"

She laughed at last, and then fell serious again.

"But what did Mr Rattar mean by saying you had engaged the detective because you suspected Malcolm and me?"

"That's precisely what I want to find out," said Ned grimly. "He could guess easy enough who was employing Carrington, because I had suggested getting a detective, only Simon wouldn't rise to it. But as to saying I suspected *you*, he knew that was a lie, and I can only suspect he's getting a little tired of life!"

They talked on for a little longer, still sitting by the table, with her eyes now constantly smiling into his, until at last he had to remind himself so vigorously of the absent and lucky baronet that the pleasure began to ebb. And then they said good-night, and he was left staring into the fire.

Next morning they faced one another in a first-class carriage on a homeward-bound train.

"What shall I say to Lady Cromarty?" she asked, half smiling, half fearfully.

He reflected for a few minutes.

"Tell her the truth. Lies don't pay in the long-run. I can bear witness to this part of the story, and to the Carrington part if necessary, though I don't want to give him away if I can help it."

"Oh no!" she said; "we mustn't interfere with him. But supposing Lady Cromarty doesn't believe——"

"Come straight to Stanesland! Will you?"

"Run away again?"

"It's the direction you run in that matters," said he. "Now, mind you, that's understood!"

She was silent for a little, and then she said—

"I can't understand why these horrible stories associate Malcolm and me. Why should we have conspired to do such a dreadful thing?"

He stared at her, and then hesitated.

"Because—well, being engaged to him——"

"Engaged to Malcolm!" she exclaimed. "Whatever put that into people's heads?"

"What!" he cried. "Aren't you?"

"Good gracious, no! Was *that* the reason then?"

He seemed too lost in his own thoughts to answer her; but they were evidently not unhappy thoughts this time.

"Who can have started such a story?" she demanded.

"Who started it?" he repeated, and then was immersed in thought again; only now there was a grim look on his face.

"Well, anyhow," he cried, in a minute or two, "we're out of that wood! Aren't we, Louisa?"

"Yes, Uncle Ned," she smiled back.

He stirred impulsively in his seat and then seemed to check himself, and for the rest of the journey he appeared to be divided between content with the present hour and an impulse to improve upon it. And then before he had realised where they were, they had stopped at a station, and she was exclaiming—

"Oh, I must get out here! I've left my bike in the station!"

"Look here," said he, with his hand on the door handle, "before you go you've got to swear that you'll come straight to Stanesland if there's another particle of trouble. Swear?"

"But what about Miss Cromarty?" she smiled.

"Miss Cromarty will say precisely the same as I do," he said with a curiously significant emphasis. "So now, I don't open this door till you promise?"

"I promise!" said she, and then she was standing on the platform waving a farewell.

"I half wish I'd risked it!" he said to himself with a sigh as the train moved on, and then he ruminated with an expression on his face that seemed to suggest a risk merely deferred.

XXIX. BROTHER AND SISTER.

Ned Cromarty found his sister in her room.

"Well, Ned," she asked, "where on earth have you been?"

He shut the door before he answered, and then came up to the fireplace and planted himself in front of her.

"Who told you that Cicely Farmond was engaged to Malcolm Cromarty?" he demanded.

She made a little grimace of comic alarm, but her eye was apprehensive.

"Don't eat my head off, Neddy! How can I remember?"

"You've got to remember," said her brother grimly. "And you'd better be careful what you tell me, for I'll go straight

to the woman, or man, you name."

She looked at him boldly enough.

"I don't know if you are aware of it, but this isn't the way I'm accustomed to be talked to."

"It's the way you're being talked to now," said he. "Who told you?"

"I absolutely refuse to answer if you speak to me like that, Ned."

"Then we part company, Lilian."

There was no doubt about the apprehension in her eye now. For a moment it seemed to wonder whether he was actually in earnest, and then to decide that he was.

"I—I don't know who told me," she said in an altered voice.

"Did anybody tell you, or did you make it up?"

"I never actually said they were engaged."

He looked at her in silence and very hard, and then he spoke deliberately.

"I won't ask you why you deceived me, Lilian, but it was a low-down trick to play on me, and it has turned out to be a damned cruel trick to play on that girl. I mentioned the engagement as a mere matter of course to somebody, and though I mentioned it confidentially, it started this slander about Malcolm Cromarty and Cicely Farmond conspiring to murder — to *murder*, Lilian — the man of all men they owed most to. That's what you've done!"

By this time Lilian Cromarty's handkerchief was at her eyes.

"I—I am very sorry, Ned," she murmured.

But he was not to be soothed by a tear, even in the most adroit lady's eye.

"The latest consequence has been," he said sternly, "that through a mixture of persecution and bad advice she has been driven to run away. Luckily I spotted her at the start and fetched her back, and I've told her that if there is the least little bit more trouble she is to come straight here, and that you will give her as good a welcome as I shall. Is that quite clear?"

"Yes," she murmured through her handkerchief.

"Otherwise," said he, "there's no room for us both here. One single suggestion that she isn't welcome—and you have full warning now of the consequences!"

"When is she coming?" she asked in an uncertain voice.

"When? Possibly never. But there's some very fishy—and, it looks to me, some very dirty business going on, and this port stands open in case of a storm. You fully understand?"

"Of course I do," she said, putting away her handkerchief. "I'm not quite a fool."

And, indeed, none of her friends or acquaintances had ever made that accusation against Lilian Cromarty.

"Well, that's all," said Ned, and began to move across the room.

But now the instinct for

finding a scapegoat began to revive.

"Who did you tell it to, Ned?" she asked.

"Simon Rattar."

"Then *he* has spread this dreadful story!" she exclaimed with righteous indignation.

Her brother stopped and slowly turned back.

"By Heaven, I've scarcely had time to think it all out yet—but it looks like it!"

"It *must* be that nasty grumpy old creature! If you told nobody else—well, it can't be anybody else!"

"But why should he go and spread such a story?"

"Because he wants to shelter some one else!"

"Who?"

"Ah, that's for the police to find out. But I'm quite certain, Ned, that that pig-headed old Simon, with his cod-fish eyes and his everlasting grunt, is at the bottom of it all!"

He stared thoughtfully into space.

"Well," he said slowly, "he has certainly been asking for trouble in one or two ways, and this seems another invitation. But he'll get it, sure! At the same time—What's his object?"

His sister had no hesitation.

"Either to make money or hide something disgraceful. You really must inquire into this, Ned!"

He dropped into a chair, and sat for a few minutes with his face in his hands. At last he looked up and shook his head.

"I'm out of my depth," he said. "I guess I'd better see Carrington."

"Mr Carrington?" she exclaimed.

"I had a long talk with him," he explained: "he seems an uncommon shrewd fellow. Yes, that's the proper line!"

She looked at him curiously, but evidently judged it tactful in the present delicate situation to ask no more. He rose now and went, still thoughtful, to the door.

"What a dreadful thing of Simon Rattar to do! Wasn't it, Ned?" she said indignantly, her eyes as bright as ever again.

He turned as she went out.

"The whole thing has been damnable!"

As the door closed behind him she made a little grimace again and then gave a little shrug.

"He's going to marry her!" she said to herself, and acting immediately on a happy inspiration, sat down to write a long and affectionate letter to an old friend whose country house might, with judicious management, be considered good for a six months' visit.

XXX. A MARKED MAN.

The unexpected energy displayed by her charming guest in bustling all over the county had surprised and a little perplexed Miss Peterkin, but she now decided that it was only a passing phase, for on the day following his visits to

Keldale and Stanesland he exhibited exactly the same leisurely calm she had admired at first. He sought out the local golf course, and for an hour or two his creditable game confirmed his reputation as a sportsman, and for the rest of the time he idled in a very gentlemanly manner.

In the course of the afternoon he strolled out and gradually drifted through the dusk towards the station. Finding the train was, as usual, indefinitely late, he strolled out again and finally drifted back just as the signals had fallen at last. It was quite dark by this time and the platform lamps were lit, but Mr Carrington chanced to stand inconspicuously in a background of shadows. As the engine hissed ponderously under the station roof and the carriage doors began to open, he still stood there, the most casual of spectators. A few passengers passed him, and then came a young man in a fur coat, on whom some very curious glances had been thrown when he alighted from his first-class compartment. Mr Carrington, however, seemed to take no interest either in him or anybody else, till the young man was actually passing him, and then he suddenly stepped out of the shadows, touched him on the shoulder, and said in a much deeper and graver voice than usual—

"Sir Malcolm Cromarty, I believe!"

The young man started violently and turned a pale face.

"Ye-es, I am," he stammered.

"May I have a word with you?" said Carrington gravely.

With a dreadfully nervous air Sir Malcolm accompanied him out into the dark road, neither speaking, and then the young man demanded hoarsely,

"What do you want with me?"

Carrington's voice suddenly resumed its usual cheerful note.

"Forgive me," he said, "for collaring you like this, but the fact is I am very keen to see you about the Keldale shootings."

Sir Malcolm gave a gasp of relief.

"Thank Heaven!" he exclaimed. "Good lord, what a fright you gave me!"

"I say, I'm awfully sorry!" said Carrington anxiously. "How frightfully stupid I must have been!"

The young man looked at him, and, like most other people, evidently found his ingenuous face and sympathetic manner irresistibly confidence-inspiring.

"Oh, not at all," he said. "In fact, you must have wondered at my manner. The fact is, Mr—er——"

"Carrington."

"Mr Carrington, that I'm in a most awful position at present. You know, of course, that I'm suspected of murder!"

"No!" exclaimed Carrington, with vast interest. "Not really!"

"It's an absolute fact—suspected of murder! Good God, just imagine it!"

The young baronet stopped and faced his new acquaintance dramatically. In spite of

his nervousness, it was evident that his notoriety had compensations.

"Yes," he said, "I—the head of an ancient and honourable house—am actually suspected of having murdered my cousin, Sir Reginald Cromarty!"

"What, that murder?" exclaimed Carrington. "By Jove, of course, I've heard a lot about the case. And you are really suspected?"

"So much so," said the baronet darkly, "that when you touched me on the shoulder I actually thought you were going to arrest me!"

Carrington seemed equally astounded and penitent at this unfortunate reading of his simple and natural action in stepping suddenly out of the dark and tapping a nervous stranger on the shoulder.

"How very tactless of me!" he repeated more than once. "Really, I must be more careful another time!"

And then he suddenly turned his monocle on to the baronet and inquired—

"But how do you know you are suspected?"

"How do I know! My God, all fingers are pointing at me! Even in my club in London I feel I am a marked man. I have discussed my awful position with all my friends, and by this time they tell me that everybody else knows too!"

"That is — er — not unnatural," said Carrington drily. "But how did you first learn?"

The young man's voice fell almost to a whisper, and he glanced apprehensively over his shoulder as he spoke.

"I knew I should be suspected the moment I heard of the crime! The very night before—perhaps at the actual moment when the deed was being done—I did a foolish thing!"

"You don't say so!" exclaimed his new friend with every appearance of surprise.

"Yes, you may not believe me, but I acted like a damned silly ass. Mind you, I am not, as a rule, a silly ass," the baronet added with dignity, "but that night I actually confided in a woman!"

"What woman?"

"My relative, Miss Cicely Farmond—a charming girl, I may mention; there was every excuse for me, still it was a rotten thing to do, I quite admit. I told her that I was hard up and feeling desperate, and I even said I was going to sit up late! And on top of that Sir Reginald was murdered that very night. Imagine my sensations for the next few days, living in the same house with the woman who had heard me say *that!* She held my fate in her hands, but, thank God, she evidently had such faith in my honour and humanity that she forbore to—er——"

"Peach," suggested Carrington. "Though as a matter of fact, I fancy she had forgotten all about the incident."

"Forgotten my words!" exclaimed the baronet indignantly. "Impossible! I can never forget them myself so long as I live!"

"Well," said Carrington soothingly, "let us suppose she remembered them. Anyhow she said nothing, and that being so, how did you first actually know that you were suspected?"

"My own man of business thought it his duty to drop me a hint!" cried the baronet.

This piece of information seemed to produce quite as much impression on his new acquaintance as his first revelation, though he took it rather more quietly.

"Really!" said he in a curious voice. "And what course of action did he advise?"

"He advised me to keep away from the place. In fact he even suggested I should go abroad — and, by Gad, I'm going too!"

To this Carrington made no reply at all. His thoughts, in fact, seemed to have wandered entirely away from Sir Malcolm Cromarty. The baronet seemed a trifle disappointed at his lack of adequate interest.

"Don't you sympathise with me?" he inquired.

"I beg your pardon," said Carrington, "my thoughts were wandering for the moment. I do sympathise. By the way, what are you going to do now?"

The baronet started.

"By Gad, my own thoughts are wandering!" said he, "though I certainly have some excuse! I must get down to the King's Arms and order a trap to take me out to Keldale House as quickly as I can." And then he added mysteriously, "I only came down here because I was urgently wired for by some one who—well, I couldn't refuse."

"I'm going to the King's Arms too. We'll walk down together, if you don't mind."

"Delighted," said the baronet, "if you don't mind being seen with such a marked man."

"I rather like them marked," smiled Carrington.

All the way to the hotel the notorious Sir Malcolm pursued what had evidently become his favourite subject — the vast sensation he was causing in society and the pain it gave a gentleman of title and position to be placed in such a predicament. When they reached the King's Arms, his new acquaintance insisted in a very friendly and confident way that there was no immediate hurry about starting for Keldale, and that the baronet must come up to his sitting-room first and have a little refreshment.

The effect of a couple of large glasses of sloe gin was quickly apparent. Sir Malcolm became decidedly happier and even more confidential. He was considerably taken aback, however, when his host suddenly asked, with a disconcertingly intense glance—

"Are you quite sure you are really innocent?"

"Innocent!" exclaimed the baronet, leaping out of his chair. "Do you mean to tell me you doubt it? Do you actually believe I am capable of killing a man in cold blood — especially the honoured head of my own house?"

Carrington seemed to suppress a smile.

"No," said he, "I don't believe it."

"Then, sir," said the baronet haughtily, "kindly do not question my honour!"

This time Carrington allowed his smile to appear.

"Sit down, Sir Malcolm," he said; "pull yourself together, and listen to a few words."

Sir Malcolm looked extremely surprised, but obeyed.

"What I am going to say is in the strictest confidence, and you must give me your word not to repeat one single thing I tell you."

His serious manner evidently impressed the young man.

"I give you my word, sir," said he.

"Well, then, in the first place, I am a detective."

For a few seconds Sir Malcolm stared at him in silence, and then burst into a hearty laugh.

"Good egg, sir!" said he—"good egg! If I had not finished my sloe gin I should drink to your health!"

It was Carrington's turn to look disconcerted. Recovering himself, he said with a smile—

"You shall have another glass of sloe gin when you have grasped the situation. I assure you I am actually a detective — or, rather, a private inquiry agent."

Sir Malcolm shook a knowing head.

"My dear fellow," said he, "you can't really pull my leg like that. I can see perfectly well you are a gentleman."

"I appreciate the compliment," said Carrington; "but just let me tell you what was in the telegram which has brought you here. It ran—'Come immediately urgent news don't answer please don't delay. Cicely Farmond.'"

Sir Malcolm's mouth fell open.

"How — how do you know that?" he asked.

"Because I wrote it myself. Miss Farmond is quite unaware it was sent."

The baronet began to look indignant.

"But—er—why the devil, sir——"

"Because I am a detective," interrupted Carrington, "and I wished to see you."

Sir Malcolm evidently began to grasp the situation at last.

"What about?" he asked, and his face was a little paler already.

"About this murder. I wanted to satisfy myself that you were — or were not — innocent."

"But—er—how?"

"By your actions, conversation, and appearance. I am now satisfied, Sir Malcolm."

"That I am innocent."

"Yes."

"Then will this be the end of my — er — painful position?"

"So far as your own anxiety goes, yes. You need no longer fear arrest."

The first look of relief which had rushed to the young man's face became clouded with a suggestion of chagrin.

"But won't people then—er — talk about me any longer?"

"I am afraid I can't prevent that—for a little longer."

The last of the baronet's worries seemed to disappear.

"Ah!" he said complacently. "Well, let them talk about me."

Carrington rose and rang the bell.

"You deserve a third sloe gin!" said he.

While the third sloe gin was being brought, he very deliberately and very thoughtfully selected and lit a cigarette, and then he said—

"You tell me specifically that Mr Rattar was the first person to inform you that suspicion was directed against you, and that he advised you to keep away, and for choice to go abroad. There is no doubt about that, is there?"

"Well," said Sir Malcolm, "he didn't specifically advise me to go abroad, but certainly his letters seemed to suggest it."

"Ah!" said Carrington, and gazed into space for a moment.

"I am now going to take the liberty of suggesting your best course of action," he resumed. "In the first place, there is no object in your going out to Keldale House, so I think you had better not. In the second place, you had better call on Mr Rattar first thing to-morrow and consult him about any point of business that strikes you as a sufficient reason for coming so far to see him. I may tell you that he has given you extremely bad advice, so you can be as offhand and brief with him as you like. Get out of his office, in fact, as quick as you can."

"That's what I always want to do," said the baronet. "I can't stick the old fellow at any price."

"If he asks you whether you have seen me, say you have just seen me but didn't fancy me, and don't give him the least idea of what we talked about. You can add that you left the King's Arms because you didn't care for my company."

"But am I to leave it?" exclaimed the young man.

Carrington nodded.

"It's better that we shouldn't stay in the same hotel. It will support your account of me. And finally, get back to London by the first train after you have seen Mr Rattar."

"Then aren't you working with old Simon?" inquired Sir Malcolm.

"Oh, in a sense, I am," said Carrington carelessly; "but I daresay you have found him yourself an arbitrary meddlesome old boy, and I like to be independent."

"By Gad, so do I," the baronet agreed cordially. "I am quite with you about old Silent Simon. I'll do just exactly as you suggest. He won't get any change out of me!"

"And now," said Carrington, "get your bag taken to any other hotel you like. I'll explain everything to Miss Peterkin."

Sir Malcolm by this time had finished his third sloe gin, and he said farewell with extreme affability, while his friend Mr Carrington dropped

into the manageress's room and explained that the poor young man had seemed so nervous and depressed that he had advised his departure for a quieter lodging. He added with great conviction that as a sporting man he would lay long odds on Sir Malcolm's innocence, and that between Miss Peterkin and himself he didn't believe a word of the current scandals.

That evening Mr Carrington joined the choice spirits in the manageress's room, and they had a very long and entertaining gossip. The conversation turned this time chiefly on the subject of Mr Simon Rattar, and if by the end of it the agreeable visitor was not fully acquainted with the history of that local celebrity, of his erring partner, and of his father before him, it was not the fault of Miss Peterkin and her friends. Nor could it fairly be said to be the visitor's fault either, for his questions were as numerous as they were intelligent.

XXXI. THE LETTER AGAIN.

On the morning after Sir Malcolm's fleeting visit to the King's Arms, the manageress was informed by her friend Mr Carrington that he would like a car immediately after breakfast.

"I really must be a little more energetic, or I'll never find anything to suit me," he smiled in his most leisurely manner. "I am thinking of running out to Keldale to have another look at the place. It might be worth taking if they'd let it."

"But you've been to Keldale already, Mr Carrington!" said Miss Peterkin. "I wonder you don't have a look at one of the other places."

"I'm one of those fellows who make up their minds slowly," he explained. "But when we cautious fellows do make up our minds, well, something generally happens!"

Circumstances, however, prevented this enthusiastic sportsman from making any further inquiry as to the letting of the Keldale shootings. When Bisset appeared at the front door, consternation was in his face. It was veiled under a restrained professional manner, but not sufficiently to escape his visitor's eye.

"What's up?" he asked at once.

Bisset looked for a moment into his sympathetic face, and then in a grave whisper said—

"Step in, sir, and I'll tell ye."

He led him into a small morning-room, carefully closed the door, and announced—

"Miss Farmond has gone, sir!"

"Gone? When and how?"

"Run away, sir, on her bicycle yesterday afternoon and deil a sign of her since!"

"Any luggage?"

"Just a wee suit-case."

"No message left, or anything of that kind?"

"Not a word or a line, sir."

"The devil!" murmured Carrington.

"That's just exac'ly it, sir!"

"No known cause? No difficulty with Lady Cromarty or anything?"

"Nothing that's come to my ears, sir."

Carrington stared blankly into space and remained silent for several minutes. Bisset watched his assistant with growing anxiety.

"Surely, sir," he burst forth at last, "you're not thinking this goes to indicate any deductions or datas showing she's guilty?"

"I'm dashed if I know what to think," murmured Carrington, still lost in thought.

Suddenly he turned his eyeglass on the other.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "the day before yesterday I passed that girl riding on a bicycle towards Keldale House after dark! Do you know where she had been?"

"Into the town, sir. I knew she was out, of course, and she just mentioned afterwards where she had been."

"Have you any idea whom she saw or what she did?"

Bisset shook his head.

"I have no datas, sir, that's the plain fac'."

"But you can't think of any likely errand to take her in so late in the afternoon?"

"No, sir. In fact, I mind thinking it was funny like her riding about alone in the dark like yon, for she's feared of being out by hersel' in the dark; I know that."

Carrington reflected for a few moments longer and then seemed to dismiss the subject.

"By the way," he asked, "can you remember if, by any chance, Sir Reginald had any difficulty or trouble or row of any kind with any one whatever during, say, the month previous to his death? I mean, with any of the tenants, or his tradesmen—or his lawyer? Take your time and think carefully."

. . . . . .

Carrington dismissed his car at Mr Rattar's office. When he was shown into the lawyer's room, he exhibited a greater air of keenness than usual.

"Well, Mr Rattar," said he, "you'll be interested to hear that I've got rather a new point of view with regard to this case."

"Indeed?" said Simon, and his lips twitched a little as he spoke. There was no doubt that he was not looking so well as usual. His face had seemed drawn and worried last time Carrington had seen him; now it might almost be termed haggard.

"I find," continued Carrington, "that Sir Reginald displayed a curious and unaccountable irritability before his death. I hear, for instance, that a letter from you had upset him quite unduly."

Carrington paused for an instant, and his monocle was full on Simon all the time, and yet he did not seem to notice the very slight but distinct start which the lawyer gave, for he continued with exactly the same confidential air—

"These seem to me very suggestive symptoms, Mr Rattar, and I am wondering very seriously whether the true solution of his mysterious

death is not" — he paused for an instant, and then in a low and earnest voice said— "suicide!"

There was no mistake about the lawyer's start this time, or about the curious fact that the strain seemed suddenly to relax, and a look of relief to take its place. And yet Carrington seemed quite oblivious to anything beyond his own striking new theory.

"That's rather a suggestive idea, isn't it?" said he.

"Very!" replied Simon with the air of one listening to a revelation.

"How he managed to inflict precisely those injuries on himself is at present a little obscure," continued Carrington, "but no doubt a really expert medical opinion will be able to suggest an explanation. The theory fits all the other facts remarkably, doesn't it?"

"Remarkably," agreed Simon.

"This letter of yours, for instance, was a very ordinary business communication, I understand."

"Very ordinary," said Simon.

"Of course you have a copy of it in your letter-book—and also Sir Reginald's reply?"

There was a moment's pause, and then Simon's grunt seemed to be forced out of himself. But he followed the grunt with a more assured "Certainly."

"May I see them?"

"You—you think they are important?"

"As bearing on Sir Reginald's state of mind only."

Simon rang his bell and ordered the letter-book to be brought in. While Carrington was examining it, his eyes never left his visitor's face, but they would have had to be singularly penetrating to discover a trace of any emotion there. Throughout his inspection, Carrington's air remained as imperturbable as though he were reading the morning paper.

"According to these letters," he observed, "there seems to have been a trifling but rather curious misunderstanding. In accordance with written instructions of a fortnight previously, you had arranged to let a certain farm to a certain man, and Sir Reginald then complained that you had overlooked a conversation between those dates in which he had cancelled these instructions. He writes with a warmth that clearly indicates his own impression that this conversation had been perfectly explicit, and that your forgetfulness or neglect of it was unaccountable, and he proposes to go into this and one or two other matters in the course of a conversation with you, which should have taken place that afternoon. You then reply that you are too busy to come out so soon, but will call on the following morning. In the meantime Sir Reginald is murdered, and so the conversation never takes place and no explanation passes between you. Those are the facts, aren't they?"

He looked up from the letter-book as he spoke, and there was no doubt he noticed something now. Indeed, the haggard look on Simon's face and a bead of perspiration on his

forehead were so striking, and so singular in the case of such a tough customer, that the least observant—or the most circumspect—must have stared. Carrington's stare lasted only for the fraction of a second, and then he was polishing his eyeglass with his handkerchief in the most indifferent way.

A second or two passed before Simon answered, and then he said abruptly—

"Sir Reginald was mistaken. No such conversation."

"Do you mean to tell me literally that *no* such conversation took place? Was it a mere delusion?"

"Er—practically. Yes, a delusion."

"Suicide!" declared Carrington with an air of profound conviction. "Yes, Mr Rattar, that is evidently the solution. The unfortunate man had clearly not been himself, probably for some little time previously. Well, I'll make a few more inquiries, but I fancy my work is nearly at an end. Good morning."

He rose and was half-way across the room when he stopped and asked, as if the idea had suddenly occurred to him—

"By the way, I hear that Miss Farmond was in seeing you a couple of days ago."

Again Simon seemed to start a little, and again he hesitated for an instant and then replied with a grunt.

"Had she any news?" asked the other.

Simon grunted again and shook his head, and Carrington threw him a friendly nod and went out.

He maintained the same air till he had turned down a by-street and was alone, and only then he gave vent to his feelings.

"I'm dashed!" he muttered, "absolutely jiggered!"

All the while he shook his head and slashed with his walking stick through the air. There was no doubt that Mr Carrington was thoroughly and genuinely puzzled.

XXXII. THE SYMPATHETIC STRANGER.

Carrington's soliloquy was interrupted by the appearance of some one on the pavement ahead of him. He pulled himself together, took out his watch, and saw that it was still only twenty minutes past twelve. After thinking for a moment he murmured—

"I might as well try 'em!"

And thereupon he set out at a brisk walk, and a few minutes later was closeted with Superintendent Sutherland in the police station. He began by handing the Superintendent a card with the name of Mr F. T. Carrington on it, but with quite a different address from that on the card he had sent up to Mr Rattar. It was, in fact, his business card, and the Superintendent regarded him with respectful interest.

After explaining his business

and his preference for not disclosing it to the public, he went briefly over the main facts of the case.

"I see you've got them all, sir," said the Superintendent, when he had finished. "There really seems nothing to add and no new light to be seen anywhere."

"I'm afraid so," agreed Carrington. "I'm afraid so."

In fact, he seemed so entirely resigned to this conclusion that he allowed, and even encouraged, the conversation to turn to other matters. The activity and enterprise of the Procurator-Fiscal seemed to have particularly impressed him, and this led to a long talk on the subject of Mr Simon Rattar. The Superintendent was also a great admirer of the Fiscal, and assured Mr Carrington that not only was Mr Simon himself the most capable and upright of men, but that the firm of Rattar had always conducted its business in a manner that was above reproach. Mr Carrington had made one or two slightly cynical but perfectly good-natured comments on lawyers in general, but he got no countenance from the Superintendent, so far as Mr Rattar and his business were concerned.

"But hadn't he some trouble at one time with his brother?" his visitor inquired.

The Superintendent admitted that this was so, and also that Sir Reginald Cromarty had suffered thereby; but he was quite positive that this trouble was entirely a thing of the past. There was no doubt that this information had a somewhat depressing effect even on the good-humoured Mr Carrington, and at last he confessed with a candid air—

"The fact is, Superintendent, that I have a theory Sir Reginald was worrying about something before his death; and as all his business affairs are conducted by Mr Rattar, I was wondering whether he had any difficulties in that direction. Now about this bad brother of Mr Rattar's—there couldn't be trouble still outstanding, you think?"

"Mr George Rattar was out of the firm, sir, years ago," the Superintendent assured him. "No, it couldna be that."

"And Mr George Rattar certainly died a short time ago, did he?"

"I can show you the paper with his death in it. I kept it as a kind of record of the end of him."

He fetched the paper, and Carrington, after looking at it for a few minutes, remarked—

"I see here an advertisement stating that Mr Rattar lost a ring."

"Yes," said the Superintendent, "that was a funny thing, because it's not often a gentleman loses a ring off his hand. I've half wondered since whether it was connected with a story of Mr Rattar's maid that his house had been broken into."

"When was that?"

"Curiously enough, it was the very night Sir Reginald was murdered."

Carrington's chair squeaked

on the floor as he sat up sharply.

"The very night of the murder!" he repeated. "Why has this never come out before?"

The stolid Superintendent looked at him in surprise.

"But what connection could there possibly be, sir? Mr Rattar thought nothing of it himself, and just mentioned it so that I would know it was a mere story, in case his servants started talking about it."

"But you yourself seemed just now to think that it might not be a mere story."

"Oh, that was just a kind o' idea," said the Superintendent easily. "It only came in my mind when the ring was never recovered."

"What were the exact facts?" demanded Carrington.

"Oh," said the Superintendent vaguely, "there was something about a window looking as if it had been entered; but really, sir, Mr Rattar paid so little attention to it himself, and we were that taken up by the Keldale case, that I made no special note of it."

"Did the servants ever speak of it again?"

"Everybody was that taken up about the murder that I doubt if they've minded on it any further."

Carrington was silent for a few moments.

"Are the servants intelligent girls?" he inquired.

"Oh, quite average intelligent. In fact, the housemaid is a particular decent sort of a girl."

At this point Mr Carrington's interest in the subject seemed to wane, and after a few pleasant generalities he thanked the Superintendent for his courtesy and strolled down to the hotel for lunch. This time his air as he walked was noticeably brisker and his eye decidedly brighter.

About three o'clock that afternoon came a ring at the front door bell of Mr Simon Rattar's commodious villa. Mary MacLean declared afterwards that she had a presentiment when she heard it, but then the poor girl had been rather troubled with presentiments lately. When she opened the front door she saw a particularly polite and agreeably-looking gentleman adorned with that unmistakable mark of fashion, a single eyeglass; and the gentleman saw a pleasant-looking but evidently high-strung and nervous young woman.

"Is Mr Simon Rattar at home?" he inquired in a courteous voice and with a soothing smile that won her heart at once; and on hearing that Mr Rattar always spent the afternoons at his office and would not return before five o'clock, his disappointment was so manifest that she felt sincerely sorry for him.

He hesitated, and was about to go away, when a happy idea struck him.

"Might I come in and write a line to be left for him?" he asked, and Mary felt greatly relieved at being able to assist the gentleman to assuage his disappointment in this way.

She led him into the library,

and somehow or other, by the time she had got him ink and paper and pen, she found herself talking to this distinguished-looking stranger in the most friendly way. It was not that he was forward or gallant, far from it; simply that he was so nice and so remarkably sympathetic. Within five minutes of making his acquaintance, Mary felt that she could tell him almost anything.

This sympathetic visitor made several appreciative remarks about the house and garden, and then, just as he had dipped his pen into the ink, he remarked—

"Rather a tempting house for burglars, I should think—if such people existed in these peaceable parts."

"Oh, but they do, sir," she assured him. "We had one in this very house one night!"

XXXIII. THE HOUSE OF MYSTERIES.

The sympathetic stranger almost laid down his pen, he was so interested by this unexpected reply.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Really a burglary in this house? I say, how awfully interesting! When did it happen?"

"Well, sir," said Mary in an impressive voice, "it's a most extraordinary thing, but it was actually the very self-same night of Sir Reginald's murder!"

So surprised and interested was the visitor that he actually did lay down his pen this time.

"Was it the same man, do you think?" he asked in a voice that seemed to thrill with sympathetic excitement.

"Indeed I've sometimes wondered!" said she.

"Tell me how it happened!"

"Well, sir," said Mary, "it was on the very morning that we heard about Sir Reginald—only before we'd heard, and I was pulling up the blinds in the wee sitting-room, when I says to myself, 'there's been some one in at this window!'"

"The wee sitting-room," repeated her visitor. "Which is that?"

He seemed so genuinely interested that before she realised what liberties she was taking in her master's house, she had led him into a small sitting-room at the end of a short passage leading out of the hall. It had evidently been intended for a smoking-room or study when the villa was built, but was clearly never used by Mr Rattar, for it contained little furniture beyond bookcases. Its window looked on to the side of the garden and not towards the drive, and a grass lawn lay beneath it, while the room itself was obviously the most isolated, and from a burglarious point of view the most promising on the ground floor.

"This is the room, sir," said Mary. "And look! you'll still can see the marks on the sash."

"Yes," said the visitor

thoughtfully, "they seem to have been made by a tackety boot."

"And forbye that, there was a wee bit mud on the floor and a tacket mark in that!"

"Was the window shut or open?"

"Shut, sir; and the most extraordinary thing was that it was snibbed too! That's what made the master say it couldna have been a burglar at all, or how did he snib the window after he went out again?"

"Then Mr Rattar didn't believe it was a burglar?"

"N—no, sir," said Mary a little reluctantly.

"Was anything stolen?"

"No, sir; that was another funny thing. But it must have been a burglar!"

"What about the other windows, and the doors? Were they all fastened in the morning?"

"Yes, sir, it's the truth they were," she admitted.

"And what did Mr Rattar do with the piece of mud?"

"Just threw it out of the window."

The sympathetic stranger crossed to the window and looked out.

"Grass underneath, I see," he observed. "No footprints outside, I suppose?"

"No, sir."

"Did the police come down and make inquiries?"

"Well, sir, the master said he would inform the pollis, but then came the news of the murder, and no one had any thoughts for anything else after that."

The sympathetic visitor stood by the window very thoughtfully for a few moments, and then turned and rewarded her with the most charming smile.

"Thank you awfully for showing me all this," said he. "By the way, what's your name?" She told him, and he added with a still nicer smile, "Thank you, Mary!"

They returned to the library and he sat down before the table again, but just as he was going to pick up the pen a thought seemed to strike him.

"By the way," he said, "I remember hearing something about the loss of a ring. The burglar didn't take that, did he?"

"Oh no, sir; I remember the advertisement was in the paper before the night of the burglary."

He opened his eyes and then smiled.

"Brilliant police you've got!" he murmured, and took up the pen again.

"There was another burglar here, and he might have taken it!" said Mary in a low voice.

The visitor once more dropped the pen and looked up with a start.

"Another burglar!" he exclaimed.

"Well, sir, this one didn't actually burgle, but——"

She thought of the master if he chanced to learn how she had been gossiping, and her sentence was cut short in the midst.

"Yes, Mary? You were saying?" cooed the persuasive visitor, and Mary succumbed again and told him of that night when a shadow moved

into the trees and footprints were left in the gravel outside the library window, and the master looked so strangely in the morning. Her visitor was so interested that once she began it was really impossible to stop.

"How very strange!" he murmured, and there was no doubt he meant it.

"But about the master's ring, sir," she began.

"You say he looked as though he were being *watched?*" he interrupted, but it was quite a polite and gentle interruption.

"Yes, sir; but the funny thing about losing the ring was that he never could get it off his finger before! I've seen him trying to, but oh, it wouldn't nearly come off!"

Again he sat up and gazed at her.

"Another mystery!" he murmured. "He lost a ring which wouldn't come off his finger? By Jove! That's very rum. Are there any more mysteries, Mary, connected with this house?"

She hesitated, and then in a very low voice answered—

"Oh yes, sir, there was one that gave me even a worse turn!"

By this time her visitor seemed to have given up all immediate thoughts of writing his note to Mr Rattar. He turned his back to the table, and looked at her with benevolent calm.

"Let's hear it, Mary," he said gently.

And then she told him the story of that dreadful night when the unknown visitor came for the box of old papers. He gazed at her, listening very attentively, and then in a soothing voice asked her several questions, more particularly when all these mysterious events occurred.

"And are these all your troubles now, Mary?" he inquired.

He asked so sympathetically that at last she even ventured to tell him her latest trouble. Till he fairly charmed it out of her, she had shrunk from telling him anything that seemed to reflect directly on her master, or to be a giving away of his concerns. But now she confessed that Mr Rattar's conduct, Mr Rattar's looks, and even Mr Rattar's very infrequent words had been troubling her strangely. How or why his looks and words should trouble her she knew not precisely; and his conduct, generally speaking, she admitted was as regular as ever.

"You don't mean that just now and then he takes a wee drop too much?" inquired her visitor helpfully.

"Oh no, sir," said she, "the master never did take more than what a gentleman should, and he's not a smoking gentleman either—quite a principle against smokers he has, sir. Oh, it's nothing like that!"

She looked over her shoulder fearfully, as though the walls might repeat her words to the master, as she told him of the curious and disturbing thing. Mr Rattar had been till lately a gentleman of the most exact habits, and then all of a sudden he had taken

to walking in his garden in a way he never did before. First she had noticed him, about the time of the burglary and the removal of the papers, walking there in the mornings. That perhaps was not so very disturbing, but since then he had changed this for a habit of slipping out of the house every night—every single night!

"And walking in the garden!" exclaimed Mr Carrington.

"Sometimes I've heard his footsteps on the gravel, sir! Even when it has been raining I've heard them. Perhaps sometimes he goes outside the garden, but I've never heard of any one meeting him on the road or streets. It's in the garden I've heard the master's steps, sir, and if you had been with him as long as I've been, and knew how regular his habits was, you'd know how I'm feeling, sir!"

"I do know, Mary; I quite understand," Mr Carrington assured her in his soothing voice, and there could be no doubt he was wondering just as hard as she.

"What o'clock does he generally go out?" he asked.

"At nine o'clock almost exactly every night, sir!"

Mr Carrington looked thoughtfully out of the window into the garden, and then at last looked down at the ink and paper and pen. Not a word was written on the paper yet.

"Look here, Mary," he said very confidentially, "I am a friend of Mr Rattar's, and I am sure you would like me to try and throw a little light on this. Perhaps something is troubling him, and I could help you to clear it up."

"Oh, sir," she cried, "you are very kind! I wish you could!"

"Perhaps the best thing then," he suggested, "would be for me not to leave a note for him after all, and for you not even to mention that I have called. As he knows me pretty well, he would be almost sure to ask you whether I had come in, and if I had left any message, and so on, and then he might perhaps find out that we had been talking, and that wouldn't perhaps be pleasant for you, would it?"

"Oh my! No indeed it wouldn't!" she agreed. "I'm that feared of the master, sir, I'd never have him know I had been talking about him, or about anything that has happened in this house!"

So, having come to this judicious decision, Mr Carrington wished Mary the kindest of farewells, and walked down the drive again. There could be no question he had plenty to think about now, though to judge from his expression it seemed doubtful whether his thoughts were very clear.

(To be concluded.)

EASTERN NIGHTS—AND FLIGHTS.

BY "CONTACT" (ALAN BOTT).

CHAPTER X.—INTRODUCING THEODORE THE GREEK, JOHN WILLIE THE BOSNIAN, AND DAVID LLOYD GEORGE'S SECOND COUSIN.

THE Maritza is a little restaurant near Stamboul station. Coming towards it from Galata Bridge one passes along a side-street so narrow that the bodies of passengers clinging to the rails of the swaying and much-loaded tram-cars often collide with pedestrians. With a guard at our heels, we would disappear through a doorway, and find ourselves in a low room that reeked of sausages and intrigue.

Whenever the captive officers at Psamatia came to Stamboul they lunched at the Maritza, where they could hear the latest rumours from the bazaars. On Sundays they were joined there by not-too-sick officers from our hospital and that of Haidar Pasha.

Theodore, the Greek waiter, looked exactly what he was—a professional conspirator who had strayed from melodrama into real life. In the whole of Turkey there was no greater expert in the science of throwing dust into the eyes of soldiers and gendarmes. He not only lived by plotting, but, next to money, seemed to like it better than anything in the world.

He was also a first-rate gossip. Having seated the guards in a corner where they could see but not hear us, the little Greek, with his bent shoulders and blue-glassed spectacles, would sidle up to our table, and producing a menu-card, say—

"Bon jour! What would you like, gentlemen?" Then, running his finger down the list as if suggesting something to eat, he would continue: "I heard to-day that the Grand Vizier had quarrelled once more with the Sultan"; or, "Enver Pasha was shot at in Galata yesterday, and is wounded in the chest. It is said that he will not recover." He never failed to produce at least one such rumour. Most often he would announce that Bulgaria was about to make a separate peace, which possibility was reported in Constantinople at least a dozen times before it really happened.

I always found him trustworthy, for his hatred of the Turks was stronger even than his greed for money, and no sum could have tempted him to become a spy in the service of the Turkish police—a position once offered to him. In any case, he was always convinced that the British would win the war, and, therefore, knowing which side his bread was buttered, would never have dared to betray the Britishers who employed him.

As an intermediary for correspondence he was reliable but expensive, his charge being twenty piastres for each letter delivered.

"Theodore, my friend," one would say, "I want you to go to Pera for me."

"Good. If you have not written the letter I will engage the guards while you prepare it."

He would then stroll across to the guards' table with the news that the British officers would be pleased to buy them whatever they wanted to eat; and the prisoner scribbled his note, a slip of paper resting on his lap and the body of Theodore screening him from the guards in the far corner. Later, the letter would be handed to the Greek waiter in the middle of the Turkish notes with which one paid the bill.

If a reply were brought, Theodore delivered it under cover of a menu-card, always with a whispered reminder, "Twenty piastres." During the last six months of the war he must have been the messenger for scores of secret communications.

It was early in July when we heard of the arrival in Haidar Pasha hospital—across the Sea of Marmora—of Captain Yeats-Brown and Captain Sir Robert Paul. Yeats-Brown was demanding attention for his nose and Paul for his ear. With vivid memories of conversations in Afion, I had sympathy for neither the nose nor the ear, but a great deal for the schemes of escape which I knew them to be planning. I sent Yeats-Brown a note, through the agency of Theodore, suggesting an appointment for lunch on the following Sunday.

As a matter of fact, I met him before lunch-time. With the rest of the congregation we were leaving for the little English church off the Grande Rue de Pera, when the pair approached the vestry door, with guards at their heels. Since I last saw them both had grown moustaches, and an appearance of dishevelled untidiness was given to Paul by a short stubby tuft of beard. At the time I was talking to Miss Whittaker, and I took the opportunity of introducing the new arrivals. Paul drew Miss Whittaker aside and began talking earnestly, while Yeats-Brown told me that the guards' orders were to take him direct to Haidar Pasha, and that we should have to wait a week longer before meeting at the Maritza.

Next Sunday afternoon, on entering the little restaurant, I heard Yeats-Brown asking Theodore to show him where a special brand of cigarettes might be bought. This he did in a loud voice, speaking Turkish, as if he wished the guards to overhear. The pair left the doorway and disappeared into a tobacco-shop. Both departed bareheaded, so that the guards remained in their seats and were unsuspicious.

Paul was at a table near them, taking great care to appear unconcerned. His beard had grown longer during the past seven days, and he looked

stranger and more dishevelled than ever.

Five minutes later he and I were joined by Yeats-Brown, who, as he returned with Theodore, took care to flaunt a newly-bought box of cigarettes before the eyes of his guard. He had been to look at the outside of Theodore's own house, so that he might recognise it. He and Paul were to be turned out of hospital two days later. They had had no time to arrange a definite scheme, but as they were to be sent to Asia Minor very shortly, they would have to escape almost immediately. I did not seek to join them, for White and I were still safe in Gumuch Souyou, and had hopes of stealing an aeroplane. I therefore wished Yeats-Brown the best of luck, and after returning to hospital waited anxiously for news.

Our first intimation of what had happened came when the chief doctor announced that no Britishers were to be allowed into the city, because two prisoners had escaped. Soon afterwards a Russian, who arrived from Psamatia with influenza, brought details. With their bank-notes (obtained from Mr S., a British civilian living in Pera) sewn in their underclothes, with faces and hands stained brown, and each wearing a fez, the pair climbed out of a window at Psamatia in the middle of the night, crept along a ledge, tied a rope to the gutter of the roof, and let themselves down into a dark doorway. The rope was found in the morning still dangling from the roof. Since then, three days ago, nothing had been heard of them.

Meanwhile the hopes of White and myself revolved round John Willie the Bosnian. This man, an Austrian aviator who was a lieutenant in the Turkish Flying Corps, had been shot down in Palestine, and in the ward next to ours was receiving treatment for minor injuries. He had told Ms. that in a few weeks' time he would desert from Turkey by aeroplane, and said he wanted a letter of recommendation, to be presented to the British when he landed at Mudros. Ms. refused to write such a compromising letter, and, not trusting the Bosnian, disregarded a suggestion that he should be taken as passenger in the proposed flight to Mudros.

Next, Ms. having left the hospital, the Bosnian approached me. Finding that I was a fellow-aviator, his first overtures dealt, innocuously enough, with war-flying in general and his own experiences in particular. Then, one evening he announced that he was about to tell me an important secret. I knew what was coming, but was careful to pretend ignorance.

John Willie—the name by which he became known to us, for we dared not risk suspicion by mentioning his real name when we talked among ourselves in the presence of Turks—thereupon produced an English grammar and said I must make pretence of teaching him

English, so that we might meet each day. He would tell the Turkish doctors that I had become his schoolmaster.

His first suggestion, as we sat down on a shady bench, was that I should write him a letter to take to Mudros. Like Ms. I declined, not knowing what was at the back of his mind. A Turkish corporal passed the bench, whereupon John Willie began mispronouncing some English words, taken at random from the page of the grammar which lay open on his lap.

"If," I said, "you can get me an aeroplane to fly to Mudros myself I will— The book is on the table, das Buch liegt auf dem Tische—" This last when the Turkish corporal turned back and glanced at us as he passed a second time.

"Zé book eez on tâbel," repeated John Willie. Then in German, "I was going to suggest the same thing myself."

John Willie proceeded to reveal the reasons why he was so anxious to desert. As a Bosnian, he said, he hated the Austrians, and it was because of this that he entered the Turkish and not the Austrian army. In any case his mother was an American, now in the United States, and his brother, so he learned, had enlisted in the American army. His own sympathies were pro-British and pro-American, and it was his earnest desire to join his mother and become naturalised as an American citizen. If, however, he landed at Mudros in Turkish uniform, he would be made a prisoner of war; whereas if, as a guarantee of good faith, he took with him a British prisoner or a letter from a British prisoner, all would be well. A friend of his, he declared, had already deserted by air, taking with him a letter to the British from General Townsend.

Next he proceeded to give details of his plan, while running his finger over the open page of the English grammar, as if reading from it. In about a fortnight's time he would be discharged from hospital, and through the influence of a friendly Staff officer he would be posted to the aerodrome at San Stefano. This aerodrome, situated about twenty miles from Stamboul, was the headquarters of the German pilots who made a pretence of defending Constantinople from British air-raids.

Having got himself appointed orderly officer for the night, and being the only pilot in the neighbourhood of the hangars (for the officers' billets were in San Stefano itself, half a mile from the aerodrome), it would be easy for him to take a petrol-loaded machine into the air, head westward, fly over the Dardanelles to the open sea, and so to Mudros. If, continued John Willie, I could make my way to San Stefano, it would be a simple matter for him to pick me up at some place of rendezvous near the aerodrome, and to take me as passenger in his back seat.

But, I objected, there would be a friend with me, and if I flew to Mudros he also must come. The Bosnian showed

his eagerness by an evident determination to override all suggested difficulties. A two-seated Rumpler, he pointed out, could take, besides the pilot, two men in the observer's cockpit, as had been proved many times. The only drawback was that if three of us travelled in the same machine our combined weight would add at least three-quarters of an hour to the flight for freedom, and if we were chased and attacked an adequate defence would be made difficult. He proposed that I might pilot the two-seater while he followed and pretended to give chase in an Albatros scout. He was more than willing to escort two of us to Mudros if we would sponsor him with the British authorities and pay his passage to America.

Several times during the days that followed I plotted with the Bosnian in the garden, always with the English grammar as camouflage for earnest talks. Finally, after discussing every detail, we evolved a plan which seemed workable. When John Willie should have been posted to San Stefano, White and I were to claim that we were cured. We should then be transferred to Psamatia, which was already half-way between Stamboul and San Stefano. He refused to take the risk of helping us to escape from Psamatia, but he would meet us after we should have reached the neighbourhood of the aerodrome. He could arrange to be night orderly officer between two given dates, and during this period he would seek us at the place of rendezvous each morning at 3 A.M.

His plan, having found us, was to go to the hangars, and on the pretence of testing a Rumpler two-seater, take it into the air. He would land in a field near us, keeping his engine ticking over. White and I must run towards him and climb into the rear cockpit. He would leave the ground again immediately, and head for the Dardanelles.

Even taking into account the heavy load of three men pursuit seemed unlikely, because all the other pilots would be asleep in their billets. In any case, it was improbable that the mechanics from the aerodrome would see us climbing into the Rumpler. We abandoned the suggestion that I should fly the two-seater while the Bosnian gave chase in an Albatros, as we failed to think of a plausible tale for John Willie to tell his mechanics, by way of explaining how the Rumpler could have been stolen from him by strangers.

The Bosnian drew detailed maps, giving the position of the aerodrome in relation to San Stefano station, with the hangars, the officers' mess, and other buildings marked on it. The place of rendezvous was to be the fringe of a small wood that bordered a field south-west of the aerodrome, on the left-hand side of the road to Bulgaria.

John Willie also procured for us a German staff-map, which included the countryside between Psamatia and

San Stefano. White and I had decided, however, to give the guards the slip during the daytime in one of the winding side-streets of Stamboul, to buy tickets openly at the railway station, and to travel to San Stefano as ordinary passengers. Using John Willie's pencilled map, we could then find the place of rendezvous and lie low in the wood until the following morning.

Meanwhile, now that Sunday visits to the city were forbidden, I employed the Bosnian as messenger for letters to Theodore. We had in mind the alternative plan of a stowaway voyage from Constantinople across the Black Sea, and we intended to carry it out if John Willie failed us. We could not altogether trust him, for he continued to demand small loans for preliminary expenses. He showed himself, besides, to be both careless and heedless, so that he seemed a far from desirable companion for a desperate adventure. We found that in conversation with some English Tommies, who were patients in another ward, he had boasted of his plan to take White and myself to Mudros; and we feared that any day, with so many people discussing it, the story might be overheard by an English-speaking doctor.

Possibly that is what happened; for I noticed that each time the Bosnian and I met in the garden we were watched closely. One of the patients—a bearded, shifty-looking Turk with one arm in a sling—made it his business to sit on the same bench, and to listen while I pretended to give instruction in the proper pronunciation of English. Although I warned John Willie to be very careful, he failed to realise the danger, and continued to make us all the more conspicuous by talking in a low voice.

One afternoon he approached me with the English grammar open in his hand, and pointed to a folded note which lay on one of its pages. Two Turkish nurses were passing. Seeing that they looked at the book, I turned the page quickly to hide the note. But the nurses had apparently seen everything, for as they entered the door of the hospital they whispered and turned back. A few minutes later the doctor on duty joined us in the garden, and told John Willie that in future it would be forbidden to talk with British prisoners.

Yet we managed three further meetings, which took place at the wash-house late in the evening. Then John Willie disappeared suddenly from the hospital, and we were left to our own resources.

We still had his maps of San Stefano; and when the period set for the escape arrived we should know if he were still prepared to take us to Mudros by means of a prearranged signal. This was, that on the Sunday morning preceding the first date of rendezvous he was to fly over Psamatia in a Nieuport scout and perform stunts.

Meanwhile, White and I now

lacked a go-between. More than ever it was necessary that one or both of us should see Theodore and try to get into touch with somebody on the steamer *Batoum*, which I could see from our ward window, moored opposite the Sultan's Palace of Dolma Bagtché.

Every request that we might be permitted to visit the shops was refused, and when White asked to see a dentist in Constantinople he was referred to the military dentist in the hospital. We had almost decided to leave for Psamatia before our time, when chance provided a way out.

My fame as a teacher of English had spread through the hospital. Aziz Bey, a young Turkish doctor, arrived at my bedside one morning, with text-books and a request for lessons. I agreed willingly, and in a few days became quite friendly with him over verb conjugations and references to the green socks worn by the son of the gardener.

At that time intelligent Turks, many of whom hated the Germans worse even than they hated the Armenians, were just beginning to realise that the Allies might well win the war. In a conversation Aziz Bey referred to this possibility, and expressed admiration for the British. In particular, he praised a man named Meester Djavid Loijorgé, who, it appeared, was the principal leader of the Allies. Djavid Loijorgé, declared Aziz Bey, was a very great man indeed.

It was then that, without any forethought, an inspiration came to me. Remembering the fear inspired in all Turks by such despotic ministers as Talaat and Enver, and realising the consideration that would be paid to any connection of the British Prime Minister, whom Aziz Bey would regard as a kind of western Talaat Pasha, I announced—

"Mr David Lloyd George is a very great man indeed, and I am his second cousin."

"Really?" said Aziz after a taken-aback pause, with credulity and obvious respect. "I never expected to learn English from a relative of Meester Loijorgé."

I hastened to explain that the matter was confidential, and must not be talked about, as I did not wish the Turkish Ministry of War to know it. I relied upon him, as a friend, to keep the relationship secret. He promised, and as far as I know only broke the promise to the extent of telling four or five or ten or twelve friends of his, all of whom treated me with the greatest consideration.

Now I am neither a second cousin of Mr David Lloyd George, nor anxious for such relationship. But in view of the curious circumstances, I was bold enough to believe that the statesman would not have objected to the claim. It needed little persuasion to induce Aziz Bey to take Mr Lloyd George's second cousin into Constantinople whenever he had a free afternoon; and the chief doctor, who was let into the secret, gave the

required permission readily enough.

Aziz and another doctor, whose name I forget, invited me to tea in the Tokatlian Hotel and the Petits Champs Gardens, took me on the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora, and introduced me, after preliminary whisperings, to several of their friends.

Fortunately for me the news from the Western Front was then taking a turn for the better. Hindenburg's great drive was expended, and the Germans had been thrown back across the Marne. With each day's telegrams Mr Lloyd George's second cousin gained further respect; and finally he was given permission to visit the shops of Pera, escorted only by a guard.

I walked over Galata bridge to the Maritza restaurant, and there was fortunate enough to find Prince Constantine Avaloff. He was making inquiries, he said, among the officers of the *Batoum*, and he thought that, for a suitable bribe, they would be quite willing, when the ship left for Odessa, to take White and myself as stowaways. The *Batoum* was expected to leave in about three weeks' time.

From Avaloff, who was still in touch with Yeats-Brown and Paul, I heard of their adventures after escaping from Psamatia. Yeats-Brown was still at large in the city, dressed in girl's clothes, lent him by Miss Whittaker. Paul, from whom Avaloff had just received a letter, was trekking towards the Gulf of Enos, with a young Greek waiter from the Maritza as guide. They hoped to put to sea from near Enos. Paul, who spoke Arabic fluently, was dressed as an Arab. I remembered the tuft of unkempt beard which he had been growing before his escape, and now saw the reason for it.

Meanwhile a party that included Yeats-Brown and two Turkish officers were waiting in Constantinople on the result of Paul's attempt. If he succeeded, said Avaloff, they would follow in his tracks, and the Greek boatman would return to the Gulf of Enos for them.

White and I decided, out of consideration for Miss Whittaker not to ask her for any help, for since the escape of Paul and Yeats-Brown she had been closely watched. The Turkish police suspected her connivance, especially when they heard that she had met them in the park at Stamboul on the day before they left Psamatia. On the following Sunday morning, when, for the first time in three weeks, we were allowed to attend service in the English Church at Pera, we took care never to look in her direction, not knowing whether one of Constantinople's myriad informers might be among the congregation.

For the moment our greatest problem was to obtain funds. We hoped to find a banker in Mr S., the English merchant who, on his own responsibility and at great risk to himself,

had several times cashed large cheques for officers who wanted to escape. We knew several Armenian and Greek merchants, but these we could not induce to supply us with money, as we had no orthodox cheque-books. Such cheques as we cashed on the Dutch Legation, or on Mr S., were written on sheets of blank paper.

In those days British bombers from Mudros and Imbros were visiting Constantinople every fine moonlit night, and spreading great terror all over the city. Whenever an alarm, false or real, was given, we were wakened by the firing of scores of machine-guns planted on the near-by roofs. Turkish soldiers, who, next to food and women, love fireworks better than anything on earth, would continue firing into the vacant air for hours, until all their ammunition was exhausted, merely for the pleasure of hearing the rap-rapping. Except on one occasion the bombs themselves did little damage; but many people were killed by the chance-falling bullets from the machine-guns.

Sometimes the aeroplanes came during the daytime; and then, anxious to see some of our own machines, we would race into the garden while the Turks were scurrying from it into the shelter of the hospital. Once a very fat Turkish pasha, with paunch and dignity well to the fore, paid Gumuch Souyou a visit of inspection, and happened to be in the middle of the garden when the anti-aircraft firing began. He cast off the dignity, and would doubtless have liked to cast off the paunch, as he raced for the hospital door and inquired for the underground baths.

The Turkish love of fireworks was useful to me during the Mahommedan month of Ramazan. At each sunset guns were fired and puff-balls were exploded, at intervals of a few seconds, all round Constantinople. Whenever I went into the city with Aziz Bey I arranged that we should be at sunset near Taxim Gardens, opposite which some puff-balls were exploded. On the first explosion I started violently and began to tremble, then continued to swerve and shiver at each subsequent noise. On returning to Gumuch Souyou I would demand aspirin and bromide to calm my nerves, which —as Aziz Bey could bear witness—must still be in bad condition. This I did because a few days earlier it had been suggested that I was now in a fit state to return to a prisoners' camp; whereas we were still a fortnight from the opening date of rendezvous with John Willie the Bosnian, and from the time when the *Batoum* might be expected to weigh anchor.

But ill-luck disbanded the queer company in the prisoners' ward of Gumuch Souyou Hospital early in the following week. On Sunday afternoon, after our visit to the church, White, R., and I visited some of my newly-made friends, in a street behind the Tokatlian. Our two guards, bribed for the purpose

and placated with a promise that we would return to them in an hour's time, loafed outside the doorway. One of the city's innumerable police spies saw us handing over a fifty-piastre note, and having by their inquiries discovered that we were British officers, reported the incident to the War Office. Next morning all but the two madmen were ordered to Psamatia, at an hour's notice.

White and I were not disappointed, for it now wanted but a week to July the 7th, when, at three o'clock in the morning, we might expect to meet John Willie the Bosnian at the corner of a wood outside San Stefano aerodrome. Meanwhile there remained the urgent necessity of cashing some cheques on Mr S.; for only ready money could make possible our escape, whether we flew to Mudros or crossed the Black Sea as stowaways on the *Batoum*.

CHAPTER XI.—THE THIRD AND FOURTH FAILURES.

"The clothes of the Capitaine Paul," demanded with triumphant satisfaction Zikki Bey, the one-eyed Turkish officer at Psamatia prison. "The Capitaine Paul needs the clothes he left here, because he finds that his Arab dress is unsuitable for the Ministry of War prison."

For the past two days we had heard rumours of Paul's recapture. Yet Zikki Bey's unwelcome confirmation, as he broke in upon a bridge party one evening, was a shock to us. The cards were abandoned as we prepared clothes and food to be sent to whatever cell of the infamous "Black Hole of Constantinople" Paul might have been taken, still dressed in the Arab disguise in which he had tried to reach the Gulf of Enos.

The bad news was an especial blow to four of us—White, Fulton, Stone, and myself,—for we ourselves were preparing to bolt within a few days. Others regarded it more philosophically. Among the party was a certain colonel who deprecated attempts at flight, because they reacted on one's fellow-prisoners. He contended that it was impossible for a Britisher to escape from Turkey.

"I knew it, I knew it," he now said; "they've nabbed Paul, and soon they'll nab Yeats-Brown."

A few days later, having heard that certain others were ready to flit, the Colonel delivered an ultimatum. Already the restrictions at Psamatia were severe, because of the disappearance of Paul and Yeats-Brown. If others went, he said, life would not be worth living, especially for such people as had prepared medical histories of well-imagined ailments, and were hoping to see their names on the list of prisoners to be exchanged as unfit.

"After the war I'll hang,

draw, and quartah the next fellow who clears off from Psamatia," he told Fulton, Stone, and myself, slapping a knee that rested on the garden wall. "A successful escape can't be done in Turkey, and it's futile to try."

Five days later four of us did clear off from Psamatia. The war is over long since; but for some reason or other we remain unhenged, undrawn, and unquartahed. As for the pronouncement that to escape from Turkey was impossible, within six weeks no less than ten men proved the contrary.

White and I had been at Psamatia for ten days. Although visits to Stamboul were now forbidden, we managed to go there three times, on the pretence of seeing a dentist. We saw Theodore, and through him received from Mr S. about three hundred Turkish pounds, in return for foolscap-paper cheques.

After very careful consideration we had chosen the plan of crossing the Black Sea as stowaways, in preference to that of trusting John Willie to fly us out of the country. Since his sudden disappearance from the hospital we had heard no definite word of the Bosnian aviator; unless, indeed, a rumour that a Bosnian officer was in the Ministry of War prison as a political suspect applied to him.

Moreover, he either failed to give us the signal that he was ready, or gave it otherwise than according to plan. On the Sunday morning preceding the first date of the rendezvous outside San Stefano aerodrome, he was to have flown over Psamatia on a Nieuport scout and performed stunts to attract my attention. An aeroplane did fly over Psamatia, and even looped the loop several times; but it was a big two-seater instead of a little Nieuport.

Under the circumstances we decided not to risk losing the comparative certainty of a slow journey to freedom *vid* Russia for the dubious uncertainty of a quick flight to Mudros.

Fulton and Stone were glad enough to inherit our arrangements with John Willie, and to take the chance of meeting him at San Stefano. Now that Paul was captured they were at a loose end, for if he had succeeded they would have followed in his footsteps by joining the second party that was to make for the Gulf of Enos. I gave them my map of the aerodrome, showing the place of rendezvous, and also a non-commital note, scribbled in German, which would explain their identity if they met the Bosnian.

For White and myself a passage on the tramp steamer *Batoum* was definitely arranged. Prince Avaloff had shown himself to be a too-talkative intermediary; but White found a more useful man in one Lieutenant Vladimir Wilkowsky, a Polish aviator whom he had known at Afion-Kara-Hissar. He himself was also planning an escape to Odessa. Unlike us, the Russians were still allowed into Stamboul with

their guards. Having placated his particular guard with a bribe, Wilkowsky often crossed the Golden Horn alone. Several times he met Titoff, the *Batoum's* chief engineer, in cafés at Galata; and finally, after much bargaining, completed arrangements whereby White and I were to travel as stowaways.

Zikki Bey warned us that everybody at Psamatia would be sent into Anatolia very shortly. Thereupon Fulton, Stone, White, and I went into conference, and decided to forestall the removal by making our dash two days later, on July the 21st. This suited Fulton and Stone, for it would bring them to the period named by the Bosnian aviator. For White and myself a hiding-place in Pera, where we could remain until the *Batoum* sailed, had been arranged by Titoff. A Russian civilian was to conceal us; and, after giving our guards the slip, we were to meet him by appointment at a beer-house in the Rue de Galata.

On the morning of July the 21st, all four of us left Psamatia by the ten o'clock train on the little suburban railway that runs between Stamboul and San Stefano. It would be less difficult to dodge the guards if we were in two parties; so Fulton and Stone chose an optician as their excuse for a trip to Stamboul, while White and I were to visit our old friend the dentist. Our real destination was the beer-house in the Rue de Galata, that of the other pair being the small wood outside San Stefano.

We split up into twos as the train steamed up, Fulton's farewell being, "Good-bye, old man. See you in the Ministry of War to-morrow!" He and Stone went into a compartment near the engine, while White and I chose the rear end of the train. All of us hoped to lose our guards among the crowd at Stamboul station.

Ten minutes before we should have reached Stamboul, the god of coincidence sent an extraordinary opportunity. Just beyond Koum-kapou the train rounded a sharp corner and ran into some empty trucks that were stationary on the line. There was a succession of clangs, a violent shock, and many a jolt and jar, mingled with screams, gasps, and frightened confusion.

One of the two guards with White and me fell on to an iron platform between two carriages. The other, unfortunately, kept both his balance and his head. I was standing a yard in front of him, behind White.

"Now's our chance. I'm off!" said White, as he pushed his way through the struggling passengers to the farther end of the compartment. I began to follow, but seeing that the guard was already suspicious of White's movements, I slowed down and pretended to pacify a nervous woman, thus blocking the guard's advance and allowing White more room.

"He's after you," I called, as White turned his head.

In the confusion White misunderstood these words as "I'm with you." Thinking

that I was ready to follow him, he edged his way to the steps at the far end of the compartment. The guard, meanwhile, shouted a warning to his companion, who had picked himself up and left the train. This second guard ran towards White along the railway embankment.

White was wearing a cap. In his inside pocket he had a felt hat, his idea being to change headgear in a crowd so that the guards, looking for a man with a cap, would fail to notice him. I now saw him fling the cap under the carriage, jam the felt hat on his head, descend from the train and jump down the embankment.

The guard with me yelled, while the second Turkish soldier leaped down the embankment, clutched at White, and almost caught him. White dodged clear, and the last I saw of him that day was as he raced down a narrow winding street, pulling and pushing out of his way the Turks and Greeks who streamed in the opposite direction, towards the scene of the collision. Close behind him the guard gave chase, while commanding passers-by to stop the British prisoner.

I jumped down the embankment, partly in a desperate attempt to elude the other guard and partly to create a diversion for White. At the bottom of the slope I twisted my ankle and fell. My guard dropped on top of me. We scrambled to our feet, myself unstable on the weak ankle, and the Turk clutching my right arm with both his hands. Under the circumstances it was useless to struggle. I remained quiet, while the guard called to his aid a passing soldier.

I stood at the bottom of the embankment, gripped painfully by the two Turks. The moments that followed were indescribably bitter. White was probably at liberty, with the glorious prospect of a successful escape. I had failed for the third time since capture, and was probably booked for a cell under the Turkish Ministry of War. My one consolation, my one hope, was in the wads of money distributed among various parts of my clothing. These would provide a chance to bribe the guards into silence, leaving me free for another attempt before the British prisoners at Psamatia were moved to Anatolia.

The three of us remained thus for ten minutes, an unregarded island in the sea of people that surged round the derailed coaches. The shaken passengers were climbing down the slope, the new arrivals were climbing up it to see the wreckage. A few yards away first aid was being administered to an injured woman.

Presently I saw Fulton and Stone approaching from the front of the train. They stopped short on seeing me held by two soldiers. I shook my head and signalled them not to come any nearer, whereupon they edged their guards away.

The guard who had chased White returned, alternately cursing and invoking the wrath

of Allah on all Englishmen. In his anger he took off his cloth hat, threw it on the ground, shook his fist at me and said, "English very bad!"

Although White had eluded him, he did not give up hope at once, but led us through a maze of alleys and streets, peering forlornly into the doorways of shops and houses and through the gratings of cellars. Finally, he held a conference with his companions, and determined to take me to Koum-kapou police station. My ankle, I was glad to find, had been ricked only slightly, and was now normal again.

"English very bad," said the man who had chased White, in the clipped Turkish used between prisoners and guards. "We"—pointing to himself and my own guard—"prison. Prison very bad. No food."

"Here is food for prison," I consoled him, handing over two Turkish pounds.

The sight of money partly pacified them, and their anger cooled. Soon they were in a fit state of mind to talk *bakshessh*, that touchstone of the Turkish character.

I produced ten more bank-notes, each of one Turkish pound. Again using pidgin-Turkish, with many an expressive gesture, I offered them to the guards, on condition that when we reached the police station they would say that although White had escaped I made no attempt to do so.

The matter needed several minutes of explanation before misunderstandings were cleared up, so that we withdrew into a side street. The two guards needed little persuasion to make them accept. Thereupon the third man (the soldier who helped to hold me at the bottom of the embankment) demanded a share. To satisfy him I was forced to produce a further sum of five Turkish pounds. He saluted and left us.

The two guards carried on an animated talk for some time longer, and as far as I could understand discussed what tale to the police would show them in the best light. They decided, apparently, not to admit having seen White escape and let him give them the slip, but to claim that he vanished when we were all knocked down by the collision.

I remembered that the food supplies in my pockets might be incriminating evidence. I had also a dangerous slip of paper, on which Wilkowsky had drawn a plan of the Galata beer-house in which I was to meet Titoff's Russian friend. This I disposed of by tearing it into shreds behind my back, and dropping the fragments a few at a time, as in a paper-chase.

The packets of food were rather more difficult to lose. There was a tin of Oxo cubes, which I flung surreptitiously on to a dust-heap. Some sticks of bivouac chocolate I left on a convenient window-sill. The worst problem was a small bag containing a mixture of cocoa and grape-nuts, taken from one of White's parcels from home. I could scarcely throw this away un-

observed; and the police station was already in sight.

A woman stood in a doorway and gazed at us. As we brushed past her on the narrow pavement, I took the bag from my pocket, dumped it into her hand, and moved on without a word or a sign. When, from a few yards ahead, I looked back, she had opened the bag and was staring in wide-eyed surprise at the cocoa—then quite unobtainable in Constantinople—which had fallen as from heaven.

The guards told a rambling tale to the police officer, who took notes of their description of White, and sent out three gendarmes to search the streets for him. Afterwards I was taken into an inner room and searched. Nothing was found to brand me as a suspect. The pockets were quite empty; and my larger bank-notes—one of a hundred Turkish pounds, one of fifty, and one of twenty-five—were undiscovered, being sewn into suspenders and braces. Finally, as the result of the twelve Turkish pounds' worth of good character given me by the guards, I continued the journey to the military dentist in Stamboul, after a guard had telephoned the news of White's disappearance to Psamatia.

Desperate after my failure in face of White's success, I made an unwise bolt for freedom across the ruins of a recent fire. Before the guards had recovered from their surprise I reached a half-demolished wall at the far end of an open space. I shinned over the wall, and found myself in a blind alley. Straight ahead was a house, and another building cut off the exit to the right. To the left was a bare wall, too high to be climbed. I turned round, walked back to meet the furious guards, and handed them another pound-note apiece. They gasped; but a sense of humour dissolved rage into laughter.

We continued to walk towards Stamboul; but each of my arms was now held tightly. Several times I heard the guards mention Theodore, so that I was not suprised when they led me into a small café near the quay (the Maritza restaurant being then out of bounds for prisoners), where one of them stayed with me while the other fetched the Greek waiter to act as interpreter.

"First," said Theodore, after he had listened to the guards' story, "you must give parole for the rest of the day."

I agreed readily enough; and over pots of beer—I only met one Mohammedan guard whose religious principles prevented him from accepting alcoholic drink in a hidden spot—the party became more amiable. The Turks' object in fetching Theodore was that he might explain to me a story which would saddle them with a minimum of blame for White's escape. If I corroborated this yarn they would agree not to mention my own misdeeds to the com-

mandant at Psamatia. Again I accepted.

We discussed and amended the story, which in its final form was divided into four parts—(1) A train collision; (2) a shock that knocked the four of us over and separated guards from prisoners; (3) the confusion; (4) the discovery that White had disappeared, unknown to the rest of the party.

Through Theodore I now offered the guards fifty Turkish pounds if they would turn their backs and let me walk out alone. They refused regretfully, saying that to lose two prisoners in one day would be as much as their lives were worth. They reminded me of my promise, and we left the café for the dentist's surgery, where I was obliged to allow a perfectly sound tooth to be stopped.

Back at Psamatia I found all the prisoners shut up in their rooms. The Turkish commandant was gibbering with rage. As we entered the arched doorway he rushed from his office and boxed the guards' ears. They bore it without a sound, comforted no doubt by the six Turkish pounds which each of them had concealed in his clothing.

We told our separate but corroborative tales—how that we had been knocked over by the shock and missed White in the confusion. White was queer in the head, I explained; and it was possible that, having been further unbalanced by the collision, he wandered away, not knowing where he was going. The commandant, ready to clutch at anything that might save his official knuckles from a rapping, affected to take the suggestion seriously, and embodied it in his report. He pretended to hope that White would recover his memory and senses, and return of his own free will.

Later the commandant, after telephonic communication with the Ministry of War, ordered all the British prisoners to prepare for a journey into Anatolia on the following day. With Fulton and Stone, who returned from their visit to the optician without having had a chance to escape, I conferred on how we could get clear in the short time left to us.

Fulton and Stone planned to escape from the prison-house during the night, but I decided to wait until morning. They wanted to leave Constantinople for San Stefano, whereas I wanted to remain in the city; and if I escaped before dawn I should have nowhere to spend the night hours, and should lay myself open to the curiosity of gendarmes. In any case I was uncertain whether or not my parole, given to the guards, ought to extend till midnight.

The three of us occupied the same bedroom. A small window from the adjoining lavatory opened on to a drain-pipe. It was decided that Fulton should climb up this pipe to the roof, until he was firmly established on the gutter. Stone would hand him a rope and their boots, and then himself climb

the drain-pipe. They would crawl along a succession of roofs, keeping in the shadow, until they reached the top of a house about fifty yards distant, which overlooked a side street outside the camp sentries' range of vision. Having fastened the rope to a chimney or to some other stable object, they could let themselves down to the road when it was conveniently deserted, with the boots slung round their necks. They planned to tramp the fifteen miles to San Stefano during the night, leaving Constantinople *viâ* the gate at Yedikuli.

That evening the sentries in the yard, stimulated by White's escape, were more alert than usual. Fulton and Stone were also hampered by a full moon, which for some hours lit up the corner outside the window. Not until just before midnight were conditions, in the form of shadow and an absent guard, suitable for the adventure.

With feet covered only by a pair of thick socks Fulton climbed through the tiny window, gripped a bend of the drain-pipe, and made use of a metal joint for foothold. Stone, holding the rope and the boots, watched from the window. Fulton gripped the gutter and was beginning to haul himself up, when—*crunch!*—the top of the flimsy drain-pipe was severed from the roof by his weight, and he fell.

Instinctively he released his feet from the joint on which they had been resting. He thus managed to land on all fours in the yard, about fifteen feet below.

The noise, however, was startling. Stone and I expected every second that Fulton would be discovered; but with great presence of mind he jumped up and ran into our room, through the near-by door, before anybody had time to investigate.

An upper window opened noisily, and from it a Turkish officer, awakened by the sound of Fulton's fall, yelled to the guards. Within five minutes the yard was full of a disordered commotion. An excited group collected round the portion of the drain-pipe which was lying on the ground.

Meanwhile Fulton and Stone had torn off their outer clothing. When Zikki Bey paid a visit of suspicious inspection, the three of us were seemingly asleep. Soon afterwards the chattering and clattering in the yard subsided. Fortunately a strong wind was blowing; and we heard afterwards that the Turks thought a violent gust must have dislodged the drain-pipe.

With nerves on edge and all our faculties keyed up, there was little sleep for the rest of that night. Our only remaining chance was to escape next morning, when we passed through the city on the way to the railway station.

CHAPTER XII.—A GREEK WAITRESS, A GERMAN BEER-HOUSE, A TURKISH POLICEMAN, AND A RUSSIAN SHIP.

At half-past eleven of a scorching morning every Britisher at Psamatia marched away from the prison-house. As a result of the furore that followed White's escape, twenty-four hours earlier, the Turks were sending us into the interior of Anatolia.

About fifty Tommies, with a detachment of guards, left first; and we — the fifteen officer-prisoners — followed twenty yards behind them. In the rear was the Turkish officer in charge, with a screen of six guards, who showed fixed bayonets, loaded rifles, and smiling ferocity.

Fulton, Stone, and I had made up our minds to slip away, or if needs be, dash away, before the party entrained at Haidar Pasha, on the Asiatic shore of the Sea of Marmora. The Turkish officer rather expected somebody to make an attempt, but knew not whom to suspect in particular. A little deduction might have told him, for except Fo., the "do-or-die trio" —as the others had named us —were the only officers wearing civilian clothes; and one would as easily have suspected Fo. of an ambition to become the Sultan's chief eunuch as of an ambition to escape.

Some of the Tommies were disabled or still sick. As they trudged through the hot streets, oppressed by heavy packages and a relentless heat, their backs bent lower and lower, and they began to straggle. One man fainted. While he was being carried into the shade the officers obtained permission to relieve the weakest Tommies of their kits. Once again, the Turks ought to have discovered the escape-gang; for the others saw to it that Fulton, Stone, and I should not be burdened with the parcels.

Meanwhile the midday heat grew more intense, and the Tommies more exhausted. It became necessary, every half-mile or so, to rest for a few minutes on the shady side of the street.

The "do-or-die trio" looked to these halts for their opportunity, but the guards always hemmed us in too closely for any chance of a break-away. A combined effort seemed impossible, so that the three of us accepted the maxim of each man for himself. Even to talk with each other on the march was imprudent; for earnest conversation, like earnest looks, must have attracted the guards' attention.

The first move was made by Fulton. We had halted on a narrow pavement, in the suburb of Yeni-kapou. There followed a short interval of lounging repose, during which we sipped at water-bottles, while the Turkish officer did his best to fraternise. Turning round casually, in a search for possible opportunities, I saw Fulton sliding into a little

booth of a shop, and then, with head bent over the counter, looking at post-cards. As far as I could gather none of the guards had noticed him. He killed time by calling for more and ever more post-cards.

Five minutes later the order to continue was given. We rose and arranged our packs, while Ms. stood in front of the shop window, so as to hide Fulton. But a Turkish sergeant counted us, and finding the number of officers short by one, became excited and aggressive as he wandered around and checked his figures. Fulton's discovery was then inevitable. He made the best of things, when observed through the window, by choosing and paying for several post-cards, and leaving the shop indifferently, as if he had entered it with no ulterior purpose. The Turkish officer looked his suspicion, but made no comments.

Stone's turn came next. At Koum-kapou we rested below the wall of an old palace. When, as he thought, nobody was looking, Stone slipped through a side-entrance, and sat down against a doorway in the left-hand corner of the courtyard. A guard darted after him and dragged him back to us. The Turkish officer saw the commotion and wanted explanations; whereupon Stone complained that although he went into the courtyard merely to find shelter from the sun, the guard had hustled him rudely. The watchful guard was reprimanded for want of politeness.

We passed from Koum-kapou to Stamboul, where crowds of be-fezzed men and veiled women gathered at every crossing to gaze their dull-eyed curiosity. Here, in the mazed streets of the Turkish quarter, I again petitioned Providence for some sort of a diversion, under cover of which we might run. But nothing happened. The guards surrounded us as if we had been wayward pigs being driven to the slaughter-house, and handled their bayonets suggestively.

At one point we could see the Maritza down a side-turning. We moved along the tram-lines towards the big bridge. Then, after a moment's delay at the toll gate, we passed over the Golden Horn.

Three-quarters of the way across the bridge the Turkish sergeant leading us switched the column-head to the steps descending to the ferry-stage for the Haidar Pasha steamboats. The Tommies were placed at one end of the wooden stage, with a separate group of guards; while the Turkish officer, who since the beginning of the journey had shown a desire to make himself pleasant, took the officer-prisoners into a little café for cooling drinks. We talked idly to the Greek waitress who served us; but at the moment I was too preoccupied to notice anything about her, except that she was plump and obliging.

Later we were grouped some distance to the left of the café, in a corner of the ferry-stage

opposite that occupied by the Tommies. There we remained for nearly an hour in the broiling sun, while waiting for the steamer which was to take us from Europe to Asia. People surged on and off the ferry-boats that moored opposite us from time to time, but never once did the guards relax enough to allow anybody to fade into the crowd. The chances were made even more desperate by some German soldiers who leaned over the bridge-rails above us and watched the changing scene.

"Our ship comes," announced the Turkish officer at last, pointing out to sea in the direction of Prinkipo Island.

In five minutes' time, I knew, the party would be on board that steamer; and once aboard it I should have left behind all hope of escape from captivity in Turkey. Only five minutes! Had the gods left *no* loophole?

I searched among the crowd in every direction, ready to take advantage of the wildest and slimmest scheme that might suggest itself. I heard Pappas Effendi and Fulton asking the Turkish officer if they might return to fetch some kit which had been left in the café. The Turk nodded and sent them away, escorted by his sergeant. I also had left some kit, I claimed on the spur of the moment, just as Pappas Effendi and Fulton were leaving us.

"All right," said the Turk, "follow your comrades."

In full view of the rest of the party I walked after Pappas Effendi and Fulton, and while keeping close to the sergeant, as if to show I was under his wing, took care to remain behind him, so that he himself should know nothing of my presence. The little group entered the café, first Pappas Effendi and Fulton, then the sergeant, and finally myself, walking softly.

Inside the doorway was the plump waitress, who smiled affably. I stayed near her while the other three passed to the inside room, where we had been seated earlier. I fingered my lips warningly, and in soft-spoken French asked where I could hide.

The waitress gave no answer, but without showing the least excitement or even surprise, half-opened a folding doorway that opened on a passage to the kitchen. I planted myself behind it, while she entered the inner room and talked to the Turkish sergeant.

A minute later I heard the three of them—Pappas Effendi, Fulton, and the guard—tramp past my doorway and out to the ferry-stage. Just then the arriving steamer hooted.

"Now," said this waitress-in-a-million, "they have gone, and so must you. The Turks may come back any moment, and if they find you here I shall suffer more than you."

"Good-bye, and a million thanks," I said fervently, and went into the open.

Without even turning my head to see whether the disappearance was known, I swerved to the right, and, taking great care not to attract attention by walking in haste, passed up the long line of steps leading to the bridge.

I continued to look straight

ahead; but I could sense the presence, only a few yards away, of the German soldiers who loitered by the railings. Fortunately several other people were moving up or down the steps. Dressed as I was in a civilian suit obtained from the Dutch Legation, the Germans paid no more attention to me than to them.

I reached the pavement, and still not daring to look behind, crossed the tram-lines to the opposite side of the bridge. Then only did I turn round to find out if I were followed.

Everything was normal. Not one of the idlers who lined the railings had noticed me; the usual traffic and the usual crowds ebbed and flowed across the bridge, the sun shone.

I lit a cigarette and walked eastward. Having crossed the circus of streets beyond the bridge, I turned to the right and made for the Rue de Galata. At the corner I looked back again. To my very great relief I found that I was still not followed.

I was conscious of an intense exhilaration as, free at last, I rubbed elbows with the crowd of nondescript Levantines. It was the first time for months that I had walked the streets without the burden of an oppressive consciousness that a yard or two to the rear was an animal of a Turkish soldier. That sense of always being followed and spied upon and menaced and held on a leash had weighed so much on my mind that I had come to look upon a guard in the same light as an old-time convict must have looked upon the leg-ball chained to his foot. The sense of freedom from this incubus was glorious.

I was worried about my chances of meeting the unknown Russian who had agreed to hide White and myself. According to the plan detailed to me some hours earlier by the Polish prisoner Vladimir Wilkowsky, he was to wait for me in a German beer-house from two o'clock to four. I had been unable to escape in time for the appointment, and it was now four-twenty.

Nevertheless, hoping that the Russian might have lingered over his drink, I decided to carry out the arrangements as if I had arrived in time. These, I remember thinking as I strolled along the Rue de Galata, studiously unconscious of gendarmes and soldiers, were suggestive of a Deadwood Dick thriller, or of some sawdust melodrama at a provincial theatre.

Having entered the beer-house (named *Zum Neuen Welt*), I was to pass down the main room until, on the right-hand side of it, I reached the piano. I must seat myself at the table next to the piano, order a glass of beer, put a cigarette behind my left ear, and look around without showing too much anxiety.

Somewhere near me I should find a man whose left ear, also, was adorned with a cigarette; or, if not already there, he would arrive very shortly. He would occupy the table beyond mine—that is to say, the next but one to the piano. On no

account must I speak to him in the beer-house; although, to make his identity doubly clear, he might ask for a light, speaking in German.

He would remain until I had paid my reckoning, then pay his own, leave the *Zum Neuen Welt*, and walk towards Pera. I was to follow him, not too closely, always taking care to be separated by a distance of at least twenty yards, so that nobody might observe how my movements depended on his. Arrived on the fringe of Pera he would unlock a door, leave it open, and disappear; whereupon all that remained for me was to follow him into this retreat, where I should find White already installed.

It was four twenty-seven when I entered the *Bierhaus Zum Neuen Welt*—a low-roofed, close-atmosphered café in the Rue de Galata. The customers inside it were few; but some of them caught my attention at once, for they included a group of German soldiers and a Turkish officer of gendarmerie, who was talking to a civilian. The table next to the piano was vacant, as were those surrounding it. I sat down, casually placed a cigarette behind my left ear, and ordered a glass of Munich beer.

As I sipped the beer I looked around the room for the man of mystery. Nobody paid the least attention to me. Plenty of cigarettes were held in the hand or the mouth, but none in the cleft of the left ear.

Still with a faint hope that the Russian who was to hide me might return, I ordered a second glass of beer, and made a study of every man present, in case one of them might be he. But nothing had happened, and nothing continued to happen. The officer of gendarmerie kept his back towards me, while the German soldiers grew boisterous over repeated relays of beer, and over mandolin strummings by a red-faced Unteroffizier.

The proprietress, a German woman of an especial corpulence, dragged her fleshy body from table to table, and finally anchored her bulk by my chair.

"You seem hot," she said in German. "You must have been walking too fast."

"No, I have merely been out in this atrocious sun."

"German?" she asked—at which I was delighted, for it proved that my accent, acquired years before as a student in Germany, was not yet too rusty to pass muster.

"No, madam, Russian," I replied, hoping hard that she could speak no Russian.

"*So!* Plenty of Russians come here since the Ukraine was occupied, and the boats began to arrive from Odessa."

Now although the fat proprietress had paid such a compliment to my German accent, I remembered the five years since I had spoken the language continuously, and I feared that in any word she might detect an English accent. I grew more and more frightened and anxious, for it was very unlikely that the man with the cigarette would arrive now. I looked at my watch, and found the time to be five twenty-five.

Finally, the tension of trying to think clearly while answering the German female's questions was more than I could stand. I paid my bill, and returned to the Rue de Galata.

By now, I judged, the guards must have discovered my escape. Probably they were searching the streets for me, and probably the gendarmerie in Galata, Pera, and Stamboul had been instructed to look out for a European in a grey civilian suit and a black hat. I stopped at the nearest outfitting shop, bought a light-grey hat, and left the black one lying on a chair. Deciding that the water would be safer than the land, I made my way back to the bridge, with the intention of chartering a small boat for a trip up the Bosphorus.

Then, crossing the open space facing the bridge, I was horrified to see Mahmoud, one of my old guards. He revolved undecidedly and peered among the crowd. Obviously he was looking for some one, and the odds were a hundred to one that the some one must be me. I edged away from him without being observed, and dodged into the fruit bazaar among the quayside streets to right of the bridge.

This bazaar was one of the dirtiest in Constantinople. Thousands of flies drifted over and settled on the uncovered baskets of dried fruit. The very stalls seemed ready to fall to pieces from decrepitude. The people, vendors and buyers alike, were dusty and ragged. A few loiterers squatted on the cobbled stones and sucked orange-peel.

It was inevitable that in such a place my more or less smart Legation suit and my newly-bought hat should attract attention. A policeman, of the "dog-collar" species, seemed particularly interested in them. I was leaving the bazaar by a narrow street that looked as if it might lead me to the subway station of Galata, when he barred the way and said something in Turkish, while holding out his hand expectantly.

I failed to understand most of the words; but one of them—*vécika*—was enough. *Vécikas* were the Turkish passports with which every honest, or rich but dishonest, civilian had to provide himself, if he wished to remain at liberty. They might be demanded at any time in any place by any gendarme.

Naturally I could produce no *vécika*. But I had the next best thing. That same morning I had discussed with Vladimir Wilkowsky the possibility of being stopped in the street by a policeman. His advice was that if it happened I must claim to be a German officer. I remembered being photographed in civilian clothes when at Gumuch Souyou hospital; and before leaving Psamatia I gave myself a useful identity by signing one of the copies with a German name.

After searching an inside pocket, I now handed to the gendarme a photograph which went to prove that I was "Fritz Richter, Oberleutnant in der Fliegertruppen." Speaking

in fluent German, interspersed with a few words of broken Turkish, I protested violently that I was a German officer in mufti, and that he would get himself into trouble for having presumed to stop a German officer. And never was I more frightened than when uttering that bombast.

Half-convinced and half-browbeaten, the gendarme took the photograph, looked at it dubiously, and consulted a Greek from among the curious crowd that circled us. This man, it appeared, claimed to know German. I understood little of the conversation, but as far as I could gather the policeman asked if I really were a German officer, and the Greek, reading the signature laboriously, informed him that it proclaimed me to be a Supreme Lieutenant of Flying Soldiers.

"*Pek èe, effendi,*" said the gendarme to me. He returned the photograph, saluted and apologised. He then went away. So did I.

I returned cautiously, through a combination of side-streets, to the bridge-head, and was relieved to find that Mahmoud had disappeared. From the quay I chartered a rowing-boat, and ordered the Turkish *kaiktche* to row me up the Bosphorus.

"Are you Russian, *effendim?*" he asked.

"No, German," I replied surlily. At that his advances ended.

The train of thought started by the word Russian led me to decide that I had better spend the night aboard the Russian tramp steamer on which White and I were to travel as stowaways. Vladimir Wilkowsky, in fact, had told me to make for it if I failed to reach the hiding-place on shore, and to ask for M. Titoff, the chief engineer. Its name was the *Batoum*, and most of its officers were in the conspiracy to help us, in return for substantial payment. I had been told that the ship was moored in the Bosphorus, but of its appearance or exact position I knew nothing.

"*Russky dampfschiff Batoum,*" I ordered the *kaiktche*, using the polyglot mixture which he was most likely to understand. But his voluble jabbering and his expressive shrug showed that he also was ignorant of where it lay.

"*Bosphor!*" I commanded, pointing higher up the Bosphorus, and thinking that I would find the name *Batoum* painted on one of the five or six ships that I could see in the distance moored in mid-stream.

But having rowed up the Bosphorus and already passed the Dolma Bagtché Palace, I found no ship labelled *Batoum*. Most of the craft seemed to use only numbers as distinguishing marks. What was worse, the majority flew the German flag; although two of the masts sported a yellow and blue standard, which I failed to recognise. Certainly none flew the Russian eagle.

Our only chance of finding the *Batoum* was to ask directions. We visited several lighters near the quay, but the *kaiktche's* questions to Turks

and Greeks were unproductive. As a last chance I told him to row close to a large steamer, on the deck of which I could see some German sailors.

"Please tell me where I can find the Russian boat *Batoum*," I shouted in German, standing up while the *kaiktche* kept the little craft steady with his oars.

"Don't know the *Batoum*," said a sailor. "There are no Russian ships now. They've become German or Austrian."

"And those two over there?" I asked, pointing towards the vessels with the yellow and blue ensigns.

"Ukrainian."

"Thanks very much," I called as we sheered off. My mistake, I realised, had been in forgetting for the moment the existence of that newly-made-in-Germany republic the Ukraine. Any vessel from Odessa not flying the German or Austrian flag would now be Ukrainian; and the yellow and blue standard must be that of the Ukrainian Republic. One of the pair flying this flag proclaimed itself to be the *Nikolaieff*. It followed that the other, which was marked only by a number, must be the *Batoum*.

Having made the *kaiktche* take me to the bottom of its gangway, I climbed to the deck. At the top of the gangway was a tall man, made noticeable by a bristling moustache and a well-pressed uniform of white drill. Obviously he was a ship's officer, and as such he must be one of the syndicate whom Captain White and I were bribing. If so, he would know of Wilkowsky.

"*Russky vapor Batoum?*" I asked in pidgin-Russian.

"*Da.*"

"M. Titoff?"—pointing at him by way of inquiry into his identity.

"*Niet. M. Belaef.*"

"*Droug Vladimir Ivanovitch Wilkowsky?*"

He gave me a long look, smiled, and said under his breath, "Yes, meester."

These were almost the only English words known by Ivan Michaelovitch Belaef, first mate of the Ukrainian tramp steamer *Batoum*, from Odessa. And for the moment, at any rate, I was among friends.

. . . . . .

At about armistice-time I was hailed unexpectedly in Port Said by C., one of the British officers whom I had left behind on the ferry-stage of the Golden Horn. He himself had seen me leave the café, climb the steps leading to the bridge, and fade into the crowd.

A few moments after my disappearance, related C., the Turkish officer called the roll of the prisoners before taking them to the ferry-boat. That roll-call almost led to the premature discovery of my escape; for when the Turk said "A-lan Thòm-as Bott," *four* people answered.

(To be continued.)

BELGIUM IN 1919.

In 1870, when Abeken, Busch, and others, were discussing the conduct of the war, General Sheridan of the United States Army used a phrase, which has often been ascribed to Bismarck, and which is still memorable. "The people," said he, "must be left nothing but their eyes to weep with over the war." This piece of American idealism chimed with Bismarck's humour, and was consonant with the teaching of the German War-Book. It was taken to the heart of the Huns long before the Great War. It has been glaringly illustrated during the last five years, and nowhere with more efficiency than in Belgium. There the grim order was given to leave "the people nothing but their eyes to weep with," and we may still observe with sorrow and resentment how faithfully General Sheridan's injunction has been carried out.

The Belgians to-day have the air of men who have emerged from a period of bitter repression. They speak as though they were newly endowed with the power of speech, freely and joyfully. So long has silence been imposed upon them, so long has the telling of what they felt and thought been forbidden on pain of death, that they are eager to impart the truth to the first-comer. It has been their fate to live and act a lie for four years, the lie of submission to the Boche, to obey such laws as revolted them, to hide under a mask of dull compliance the patriotism which burned fiercely within them. They heard no other news than was vouchsafed them by their tyrants, and only their own hopefulness could have given it a just interpretation. At least they may remember with pride that never in their darkest hour did they despair of the future; that never did they believe in the perpetual curse of a German domination.

And they have borne the heaviest infliction which can be put upon mortal man—the infliction of slavery—because their own honour welcomed it. When, in 1914, they made the supreme choice of war, they knew something of the misery and suffering which war would bring in its train. They might have chosen the easier way of acquiescence with the bully's will. They preferred to accept the burden and the glory of defiance. Their sufferings, then, being of their own seeking, have set upon their country's brow the crown of martyrdom. And if the wearing of the crown lightened through four weary years the weight of the cross, the relief is still far greater than it would have been even if Belgium had not played an heroic part. The men and women you meet in the street feel the necessity of speech. "Every one in Louvain," said a stranger to

me, "has a separate tale to tell, and the tales all differ one from another." If they were woven together what an epic of suffering they would make! And yet in all the stories of suffering the note of exaltation may be plainly heard. "When the Germans, drunk and insolent, first came into the town," said a citizen of Louvain, "everything was fine about them. They had fine horses, fine waggons laden with stores of all sorts, and they left us with three *charrettes* drawn by one poor tit apiece." Here, in truth, was a lawful cause of exaltation.

Wherever you go in Belgium there is the same tale to be told. At Bruges the traveller is stopped, as by an Ancient Mariner, and with the complaisance of the Wedding Guest, "he cannot choose but hear." The villains of the drama as it was played in that ancient city were Schroeder and von Buttlar, whose ignoble names are assured of an immortality of shame. "Schroeder," I was told, "was not content to put his victims quietly against a wall and shoot them. He would bring them out, day after day, to the place of death as they thought, and then affecting to change his mind would send them back to their cells. But he always killed them in the end, when he thought that he had broken their spirit of courage and endurance." Such tigerish ferocity as this cannot be paralleled from the experience of civilised peoples, and unto the end of time the Boche will remain a bogey wherewith to frighten the Belgian children.

It is Louvain which leaves upon the mind the deepest impression of German ferocity. For the wanton destruction of this peaceful city there was no military excuse. When the Kaiser told President Wilson that his "heart bled" for Louvain, which "had to be destroyed in self-defence and for the protection of my troops," he knew, as we knew also, that he spoke with the voice of lying hypocrisy. And Louvain remains to-day very much what it was when the Huns had glutted their drunken fury upon it. The Rue de la Station—that road of many bitter tragedies—is still a ruin, and the pity of it was enhanced on the day that I walked along it by a summer hurricane and torrents of summer rain. Everywhere the Hun has left upon it his cruel and purposeless mark. The most of the houses are levelled to the basement, and if a front door survive here and there, it has forgotten its proper end, and leads nowhither. And the sense of desolation is enhanced by the universal presence of the willow-herb. Where once were the homes of decency and comfort, there are to-day but fields of willow-herb, the ominous camp-follower of fire and devastation, the one thing of natural beauty which marks the brutal advance of the Huns.

As you approach the heart of the city, the work of destruction seems yet more

wanton. What harm had the noble church done to the Germans that they should assail it with fire and sword? A poor broken shrine, closed and boarded up, which none may approach without danger, a sanctuary which affords neither safety nor the solace of prayer, it stands a gaunt monument of German rage. It was shattered not in the act of war, for no battle was fought at Louvain, but in the panic fury of the barbarians, delighting to destroy what their clumsy hands could never replace. The Germans take great credit to themselves that the beautiful Hôtel de Ville was preserved. "It caught fire," they say, "but was saved by the help of German troops." Here is a double falsehood. It did not catch fire, and if it had, by whose hand would the fire have been applied? Hence it needed no German troops to save it; in truth, it was never in danger, because the Germans had installed themselves therein, and spared it, not for any motive of humanity, not for any respect paid to its beauty and its age, but merely because they found it a convenient shelter for their Headquarters' Staff.

If the Germans kept their sacrilegious hands from the Hôtel de Ville, they saw no reason why they should save the University of Louvain, and with the thoroughness which marks their evil deeds they demolished what no doubt they regarded as a rival seat of learning. The University buildings, once the pride of Belgium, are now no more than a gaunt and pitiful shell, containing nothing but shattered memories. The marvellous books, the priceless manuscripts, which once filled a gracious library, have perished in dust and ashes. The Germans in their Sadic fury made war upon the past as well as upon the present, and with the praise of Kultur ever upon their tongue proved their contempt for learning by a violent act of destruction. To gaze upon the wanton ruin and to think of the treasures once enshrined within the shattered walls, is to condemn to eternal obloquy the Kaiser and all his works. The havoc of war is sometimes inevitable. The pitiless annihilation of books and manuscripts is a crime from which all but Huns and Vandals shrink in horror.

And the crime and the blunder of Louvain seem all the greater when we recall the impudent professions of the Huns. We were told at the outset of the war, before ever the University of Louvain was sprinkled with petroleum, the more speedily to ignite the bonfire of Kultur, that if the German arms met with disaster, "spiritual and moral liberty and the profound and lofty aspirations of German thought would for long ages be lost to mankind." A visit to Louvain will persuade the waverer to look upon the loss with equanimity. He will see there practical proof that the Germans despise all learning, all culture that are not their

own. Their boasted love of scholarship is but their military system in another shape. They declared war upon books, the very implements of the culture which they professed to revere, and doubtless they counted their printed or written victims with the same pride wherewith they numbered the dead whom they left upon the field of battle. But the victory which they pretend to have won at Louvain was a Pyrrhic victory, as every visitor to Louvain may see for himself. The ruins of the University speak with an eloquence which is denied to words, and now that the swords are sheathed and the roar of the artillery is at last silenced, the destruction of Louvain is remembered as an indelible disgrace. The German arms have met with disaster, and from that disaster the truth, far better worth fighting for than "the profound and lofty aspirations of German thought," emerges clear and indestructible.

The Germans have attempted, with a callous ingenuity, to throw the responsibility for what was done at Louvain upon the Belgians. An unspeakable professer of theology—Krebs is his name—has proved to his own and nobody else's satisfaction that the fault of it all was Louvain's own. "We in Germany," he wrote in his brutish simplicity, "find it hard to understand why the rarities of the Library were not stored in fire-proof places when war like a wind of fire drew near to the city. We in Freiburg took care to have the *unicums* of the municipal art collection put in safety, although the war was far from being so near our doors as the doors of Louvain." Only a Teuton with a complete lack of humour could put up such a defence as this. How should Louvain have known that Germany was mad with a mania of destruction, that her zeal for learning was a sham and a pretence? There is abundant evidence that in the early days of the war, even after the invasion, the Belgians cherished a pathetic faith that the Germans would fight like civilised gentlemen. And when the sad illusion was dispelled, it was too late for them to hide their treasures. Upon the Germans the war came not like a thief in the night, but long and sedulously heralded. They were given due warning of their Kaiser's plot against the peace of Europe, and they could put away their rarities where they would.

Though the body of the University at Louvain is but a skeleton, its soul lives, and will live for ever more. The books which once revealed to eager students the secrets of the past are dust and ashes; but the spirit of learning still broods over the few quiet streets and silent squares, which remain intact and unharmed. Moreover, Cardinal Mercier's refusal to reopen the University while the hated Boche occupied an inch of Belgian soil proves that, as scholarship is not wanting, so courage is there also, that the future of Louvain is secure, in

spite of the sufferings which she has endured with cheerfulness. And as for the books, though they can never be replaced, though as near an equivalent as possible should have been exacted from the libraries of Germany, friendly hands will furnish what they can, as soon as ever a building is ready to receive their gifts.

The destruction of Louvain was a piece of wantonness which was not imposed by the war. Cruelly wanton also was the pillage and the ruin of Belgium's factories. Go to Charleroi and you will find another example of the Boche's reverence for "spiritual and moral liberty." As the Boches were resolved that no learning but their own should survive in Europe, so they were determined that henceforth their neighbours should be incapacitated from manufacturing such goods as might come into competition with the products of their own industry. It seemed to them an ingenious method of securing the victory, whatever disaster befell their arms. The havoc which they have wrought is pitiful and purposed. Where they were unable to carry off the Belgian machines they blew them up, and if time were lacking for this enterprise they took out essential parts so that the whole should be useless. Now, all this was done by the Germans not in the excitement of war, but in the certainty of a swiftly approaching defeat, and the work of destruction was achieved by bombs specially contrived. This was a last attack made upon the very life of Belgium a few weeks only before the armistice. This calculated baseness was overlooked in the peace terms. A Belgian manufacturer, it is true, may recover his machines if he can find them. But, as a Belgian said to me, Germany is a large place, and the search is commonly hopeless. The result, then, carefully foreseen by the Boches, is that Germany begins again in a far stronger position to capture the trade of Europe than France or Belgium—the gallant countries which in her brutality she set out to destroy.

At Louvain and Charleroi you may see what vandalism and greed can achieve, apart from the necessities of war. Ypres and Dixmude are eternal witnesses of the ruthless devastation caused by the deadly ingenuity of modern weapons. I went to Ypres from Brussels by motor-car on a day of rejoicing. It was the festival of victory, and the towns and villages through which we passed were packed with joyous crowds. All were in their Sunday clothes, and celebrated with what merriment they could the liberation of their country. By the time we reached Courtrai the signs of the war were plainly visible. In the main street many a house was grievously wounded, yet it seemed to bear its sorrows lightly enough, and they are not such as time will not assuage. Even Menin, a town and a name of bitter memories, has travelled far on the road of recovery. The inn

once more shelters the *commis voyageurs*, who brought it business and prosperity in the far-off days that were before the war. But no sooner did we leave Menin than we found ourselves in the devastated area, a no-man's-land, brutally torn to pieces by four years of fierce fighting, where nothing is to be seen save derelict tanks, empty shells, broken trenches, all the miserable breakages of the long and bitter conflict. Out there on the right you may see what is called the Cemetery of the Tanks, where lie dead many a hero, many a hope. And then by a rough and hazardous road you come suddenly upon Ypres, and you understand, as you have not understood before, the true meaning of warfare.

Ypres and its desolation cannot be set down in words. It is destruction made manifest. The few gaunt ruins that remain of the famous Cloth Hall, once the pride and glory of the country, are the measure by which you may count the cost which Ypres is asked to pay for an imperishable name. You have no standards by which you may measure the punishment inflicted upon the town and upon the country about it. Of the few shreds and patches that are left to it, none has any resemblance to life. Everything is distorted, out of shape, out of colour, out of resemblance. The roads which lead to Ypres are not like roads. They are patched with sleepers, and the holes, which break them in pieces, are hastily filled. The vegetation is not like vegetation. No blade of grass is visible. There are no crops; there are no trees that are not broken, armless, twisted out of the shapes which once were theirs. Bare ruined choirs, where it is difficult to believe that bird ever sang! Nothing is discernible save dust, a grey dust, in which all the things are mingled which once made up the life and the decoration of a beautiful town. And yet, here an exception may be noted. In the general devastation, which spared neither grass nor tree, certain herbs have escaped, which it seems that even war cannot kill. The willow-herb, which covers Louvain, grows at Ypres with an idle profusion. Camomile and chicory, which fill a corner in every Belgian garden, have survived here and there the shocks and chances of the war, and as you look over the parched and barren landscape you may recognise where are the shell-holes, by the bulrushes which flourish therein.

Though the war is over, a restless activity prevails on all sides. The British are still in charge, and are doing what is possible to clear the ground—it cannot be called soil—of the weight of metal which encumbers it. The shells, live or dead, are collected by sedulous hands, and set in heaps by the roadside. Behind barbed wire, here and there, you may see groups of sinister, ill-omened Chinamen, whose duty it has been to help in the work of clearance—a duty which they perform with

an ill grace and without much effect. And then you come upon a group of idle German prisoners, attempting to imitate their captors by playing football, a game which they plainly do not understand. But it is the British soldier who dominates the scene, and yet it seems as though not even his energy, aided by the industry of the Belgians, will ever bring this parched and ruined no-man's-land back into cultivation.

And so we pass through what once were living villages, St Jean, Poelcapelle, and the rest—villages to-day names and no more. The place of each is marked by a board bearing an inscription: *Ici fut*—or as it might be *Ci-gît*, a plain memorial of the dead. Thus only can they who once dwelt therein find their way back to the site of their ancient homes; and even for them it is idle to seek house or church, for they have sought a common grave in the dust. And so through what was once the living Forest of Houthulst, now a collection of dead trunks, which look like the ghosts of trees, we come to Dixmude, or rather to the ground upon which Dixmude, busy and prosperous, once stood. Little enough is left of its business or prosperity. Its church and its Hôtel de Ville are no more; its houses are blotted out—all save their basements, and it is an eloquent testimony to the persistence of human life that into these very basements the inhabitants are returning, that for a time at least they may make a home for themselves underground. That the work of reparation will go swiftly on there is no doubt. We shall presently see in Belgium such a recovery as will surprise us. But that recovery, which shall surely come, does not make the reflection any less bitter, that the Huns, who have brought this havoc upon the world, have returned to a country untouched by war. Having laid France and Belgium in ruin, they are free to pursue their profitable industries as though nothing had happened—and there are those, greedy and lily-livered, who are ready at once to share with them the profits of their trade!

The war at sea leaves no scars behind it. The ocean is as clean after a fight as before it. It is immune from the dust and dirt which marks the conflict on land. At Ypres you see only desolation. At Zeebrugge you are reminded only of heroic deeds heroically accomplished. The achievement of St George's Day, which will be immortal in our annals, cannot but fill those who look upon the harbour and the mole with pride. In the summer sunlight the *Iphigenia* and the *Intrepid* are plainly visible, still blocking the entrance to the canal, whence in war-time the German submarines came forth upon their murderous work. And there, joining the mole to the mainland, is the viaduct, already repaired, which was destroyed by our intrepid sailors. It is by such deeds as these that we

have established our empire upon the sea, and so long as the ancient courage survives we need not fear the power of any adversary.

Belgium, then, has suffered grievously from the war. She meets her sufferings with a quiet resolution. If her factories are still perforce idle, she is already repairing her railways and rebuilding her bridges. On the road between Ostend and Brussels there are many signs of devastation, and as many of a stout determination that men and women shall be hindered as little as possible in coming and going between the two towns. As you travel by train, you hear always the sound of the hammer, you see the busy workmen at their toil. New lines are being laid, rivers are being spanned afresh, and on all hands the hopefulness and industry of the people are evident. Nor are the Belgians content with the work of reparation. Always skilful husbandmen, they are bringing back into their intensive cultivation every inch of the soil that is possible. The country about Ypres and Dixmude, and all that area that is rightly called "devastated," will defy all the efforts of agriculture for many a year to come. But elsewhere scarce a patch of ground is left uncultivated, and everywhere you may see signs of the neatness and intensity characteristic of the Belgians. They are a busy folk, and they have made up their minds that the results of the war shall not hamper them for long. Wasting no time in idle regrets, they are doing their best to recover what has been lost; they are not afraid of long hours, nor are they greedy to grasp more money than they have earned. And above all, they are not losing their chances in idle, purposeless strikes.

Though the Belgians are doing all that they can to help themselves, they are not wholly satisfied with the help which has been given by others. They confess freely and frankly that they are disappointed. They have not received, they will never receive, that which the politicians promised them in the enthusiasm aroused by their gallant resistance to the might of Germany. The reasons of their disappointment are many and various. For some reason which is not easily intelligible, they wished Brussels to be the seat of the League of Nations. It would have typified for them the defeat of the Germans and their own successful sacrifice. They would have accepted it as a compliment had their capital been chosen as the headquarters of that Parliament of the World, which its champions believe will banish war for ever from the earth. In our eyes the League of Nations is a sad piece of sentimentalism, which, wherever it sits, will presently be covered with the mildew of neglect. But the Belgians think otherwise, and since they wished to welcome the representatives of all the peoples at Brussels, their wish might be gratified. At any rate,

Geneva has no claim upon our generosity, and Mr Wilson's plea that there should be no room for hatred in any heart is both inhuman and ineffectual.

Moreover, the Belgians thought, with some justification, that they did not carry as much weight at the Conference in Paris as they might have claimed after what they did and suffered in the war. Some nations, which had hardly been disturbed by the hostilities, are said to have been listened to with greater attention than was bestowed upon the Belgians. If this were so, it is to be regretted. They who fought the first battle against the invading hordes of the Huns had surely the right to speak and to be heard, wherever the Allies were gathered together. Moreover, they are uncertain of their future. The only treaties which guaranteed their territory against invasion are no longer of any effect. No treaties have yet been made to take their place. May it not be possible, in the next war, that Germany will be able to invade Belgium without the pains of tearing up a scrap of paper?

These troubles of the mind are in the region of sentiment. The other troubles from which Belgium suffers are sternly practical. No one who has visited the devastated areas, who has seen the vindictive destruction of Louvain and other Belgian towns, needs to be told that the work of reparation will be long and costly. And by demolishing the Belgian factories the Germans have done their best to retard Belgium's financial recovery. How, without an instant resumption of industry, shall the money be found wherewith to build afresh houses and factories and universities? Again and again, in the course of the war, it was said that the complete reparation of Belgium should be a first charge upon the indemnities which Germany was to be asked to pay. And the reality has fallen far below the expectation. Moreover, let it be remembered that for four years the Germans occupied a large part of Belgium. During those weary years the Belgians were forced to support the army of occupation, and to pay whatever exactions the Germans chose to wring out of them. The fines that were levied upon frivolous pretexts, and paid perforce, amount to a vast sum. And the Germans are not asked to give back that which they have stolen. They made Belgium pay for the war which they waged against her, and are permitted to go off with money and stolen goods in their pockets.

The two milliards and a half of francs which have been allotted to Belgium from the German indemnities will not balance the sum exacted from her by the Huns. She is out of pocket from the German assault, and is still asked to mend her broken towns, to repair her factories, and to pay the costs of her war. And worse than this, she is left with seven milliards and a half of

depreciated German marks in her banks, in exchange for which the Germans have taken good Belgian gold. On this transaction alone she loses more than five milliards, or more than twice the amount which has been allotted to her. Is it strange that she feels disappointed? Is it to be wondered at that she protests against an arrangement with Germany which proves how war can be made lucrative to the aggressor, and which throws upon her the burden of loss?

Yet it is useless to complain. Germany has destroyed the wealth of all of us, and each of us must repair the ruin as best we may. That Belgium will fall below her opportunity none will believe who have seen her already busy and at work. The country of Van Eyck and Memling and Alfred Stevens will not lose the mastery of the arts which has always been hers. Her fertile country, purged of shells and barbed wire, will furnish her with heavy crops as of yore. Once again she will send the goods fashioned in her restored factories to the ends of the earth, especially if her port of Antwerp is freed from needless and vexatious restrictions. And with her sorrows forgotten, she will regain her ancient prosperity, strong in the conviction that she has won all, because she did not lose her own soul.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

"THE FINDER OF LOST THINGS."

BY EDMUND CANDLER.

I.

"You were really impressed? And the thought-reading afterwards — some one found a thimble under the piano? In fact, you are beginning to believe there is something in it?"

Malaher stirred the whisky and lemon and sugar in the glass of his very young friend as he delivered himself thus ironically. We had been talking about spirits and savages all night, when the arrival of this buoyant youth, with his pores all open to new experience, gave the conversation another lap. The happy cub was learning Arabic and surveying, and he came to Malaher sometimes for help. He had three pounds an hour, the zest of an Elizabethan, and four virgin continents to squeeze of their romance.

"Well, you see," the boy said as he flung his overcoat on the head of an Ovis Ammon, "I have never had any truck with that kind of thing before. But perhaps you don't believe in psychical research?"

Malaher smiled.

"I think I believe in the psychical part," he said. "I am not sure about the research. You get the best results among savages."

Malaher threw open the window and looked down on the Embankment Gardens and the double arc of light along the Thames.

"I was going to tell you about the case of an epileptic. Have you ever heard of a man called Wanless?"

"He goes in for big-game shooting, doesn't he? I remember his name in Ward. He got the first head of a takin shot by a European."

"That is the man. No, he was not the epileptic, but he is mixed up in the story. I came upon his tracks in one of the Mantze States in Sechuan on the Tibetan border. I was out after takin too — ostensibly; but I didn't see the Roman nose of one the whole trek: Wanless kept me too busy."

"Wanless was killed, wasn't he?" the boy interrupted.

"You don't remember the story? It was before your time. Then I'll tell you."

Malaher pulled the window down. There was enough chill fog in the room to make us draw in our chairs to the fire. The boy had that tiptoe-for-adventure look in his eyes and the poise of his head which had first attracted Malaher.

"I met his sister first," he went on. "I was washing my feet in my tent when I thought I heard an English lady's voice, but put it down to an illusion like church bells in the desert.

Then my orderly brought in a large square visiting-card with a black edge, and I read—

MISS WANLESS.

THE PINES.

I peeped through the chink in the fly and saw the skirts of the first white woman who had been within a hundred miles of Mishi Rhotang. I stuck my feet in socks and shoes and persuaded her to come in. In a few minutes she was in possession of the camp-stool and I was sitting on the edge of the bed.

"In spite of her composure, I felt that she was shy. She talked about the last two or three days of her journey and her misadventures, which she did not exaggerate. For a long time she gave me no inkling as to who she was, or why she had come. All I gathered was, that she had come straight to Mishi Rhotang from Charing Cross, and had never been out of England before.

"While I made tea I was wondering if 'The Pines' was at Wimbledon or Hampstead, or where. She was suburban from her boots to her hat and umbrella, and quite unchanged by circumstances. She looked like a denizen of the Stores. She might have come straight up in the lift out of the Tube. Her rather shapeless dark-blue cotton dress with white spots must often have passed from 'The Pines' to 'The Gables.'

"'Wanless'—'Wanless!' I kept repeating the name to myself, trying to remember where I had heard it.

"When the water had boiled and I had got out the jam and biscuits, she rose, as a matter of course, to pour out the tea. She always stood as if she had sunk in, and held her hands in front of her as if she were pressing something down. Her hair was combed straight back and parted and tied up behind. Her features and her figure were ample, though the lines were not clearly defined. Her walk was slow and deliberate. You could see that she would waddle if she hurried.

"I asked her where she had pitched her tent. She had not got one. She had heard there were inns, and she had been putting up in the most filthy, bug-ridden hovels all the way from the Yangtse. I remembered that nearly a month before I had been driven into one by a deluge when I was a few hours ahead of my kit, and I had found the chinks and peepholes in the wall stuffed with leaves of the 'Occult Review.' I asked the innkeeper who had put them there, and he said an Englishwoman who had left a day or two before. I imagined some hardened missionary, and let it pass out of my mind.

"Miss Wanless admitted that she found the Chinese 'trying.' I thought of the

gaping herd that would follow her into the hovel. A white man in an inn is a bit of a show, but a white woman! It made me sick to think of the dirty inquisitive crowd. The planks in the wall did not meet anywhere. The rooms were built against intrusion, but not for privacy. She could bar them all right, but her movements would be watched. If she took out a hairpin there would be some guttural comment, followed by guffaws or whispering and spitting. This would go on till the early hours, and there would be constant shufflings all through the night for a place at the chinks. She could not hide from those curious eyes; the 'Occult Review' would not be occult enough.

"Miss Wanless was a spiritualist, I discovered, and she had got some queer ideas in her head about a 'medium' in the Black Cap Monastery at Mishi Rhotang near my camp; but I did not find out about her trouble all at once. She was uncomfortably shy, and would not get to the point; I could not draw her out.

"Our desultory talk turned from inns to sport. She asked me if I had 'been successful in securing' a takin yet. She called it 'budorca,' the local name. She had heard that they were 'very evasive creatures.' It was not till then that I connected her with the Shikari man who had passed through months before, and who had not been heard of since. I did not know that he was supposed to be dead, and that it had got into the English papers.

"'Are you any relation to the Wanless who was here shooting?' I asked.

"She pressed her hands more tightly into her lap and looked down on the ground. 'I want you to help me to find my brother,' she said. And I saw tears in her eyes.

"She did not believe that he was dead yet, but she had a presentiment that he was dying. She thought of him captured by wandering tribes and held up to ransom, or lingering somewhere in prison in the hands of fanatics. Torture was in her mind, I know, though she could not name it.

"I tried to reassure her, suggesting a dozen different things he might be doing—working through to Burma by Batang and Rima, or exploring the Lolo country. One would have no news of him there; he would be absolutely cut off. I asked her if she was sure he was not on secret service. I knew the Intelligence Department wanted to find out what the Chinese were doing on the Tibetan and Burmese frontier, and what control they had over the semi-independent border tribes. I was working for the Indian Government myself. The takin, of course, were by the way.

"But Wanless' journey was not even indirectly official. She had been taken by her friends at home to the India Office, the War Office, and

the Foreign Office. He was not on any confidential service. Nothing had been heard of him in London since he had taken his passport.

"'He may be in Tibet in disguise,' I suggested. 'He may be in Lhasa now.'

"She shook her head sadly.

"'Or he might be doubling back through the great desert to Pekin.'

"'That would be like him,' she said. And she told me how desert literature had held him as a child. Even at school they called him 'Gobi and Shamo.'

"It was only by talking about her brother that I could draw her out of her shell; but to every suggestion she answered, 'He would have been heard of.' And I knew she was right. I had little doubt in my heart that he was dead. Everything had been done that was possible. The Chinese Government had expressed their concern; officials had been stirred up in the provinces; but there was no trace of him beyond the Mantze States. He had been last seen at Mishi Rhotang.

"That brought us back to the monastery and the 'medium.' I gradually discovered that she counted more on this drug-sodden, primitive epileptic than on all the machinery of State. She wanted me to go to the Gompa and take part in some kind of *séance*.

"It was something I said about a lost telepathic sense still traceable among primitives which opened her eyes to the possibility of my being sympathetic. We talked about the phenomenal transmission of news, and I told her of a case I had come across in the Malay States and another at Khanno. She had expected me to scoff at the idea of her yellow clairvoyant, and this had aggravated her shyness and hesitation in coming to a point. She expanded when she found that I was more open-minded about what she called 'spiritualism' than the stockbroking young men who left cards at 'The Pines.'

"I had seen some odd things among the dervishes, even in those days. Did I ever tell you about the Medicine Man at Bornu? Then there was the Danakil dervish at Ankober, and the djeb-djeb. The trance is brought on by a violent rhythmic shake of the head from left to right."

Malaher stretched out for a totem on the pipe-rack, and balanced it on his palm as if he were going to put the little man through his paces, but laid it down on the floor. "He wants a joint in his neck," he said.

The boy had pulled an envelope out of his pocket and was scribbling on the back: "Bornu — Danakil — djeb-djeb," and looking hungrily at Malaher as who should say, "We will get that out of you another night."

"Still," Malaher continued, "it had never occurred to me to consult an epileptic black-cap lama professionally.

"They are the very lowest

type, you know, a pre-Buddhist cult gathered into the fringe—a survival of the old *Sakti* worship. The Red and Yellow Caps hate them. They turn their prayer-wheels left to right, wear an offensive black head-dress, and give their idols blood.

"I had been up to the Gompa; it was a most repulsive shrine. You could imagine a blight or a murrain coming from it, but nothing healing or clean. I told Miss Wanless I would go with her, but not into the temple. No woman could face those idols and keep her self-respect. She should have her *séance* in the courtyard.

"She would have gone without me, she had the pluck; but I was bound to see her through. I did not trust her interpreter—a low-browed, lantern-jawed Chinaman from Shanghai; and I had little faith in her errand, though I was no scoffer. It pleased her to find that I accepted some of her dreams as facts. We agreed on many points, only she called phenomena 'supernatural,' which are really super-normal. It has always seemed natural to me that a mind thrown out of its normal state should possess supernormal faculties since it moves on a different plane, in a new dimension. Primitive people know this, and use artificial means to unhinge the waking consciousness. There is money in it—hence the Medicine Man and the Diviner."

"And the Pythian priestess at Delphi, didn't you say?" the boy interrupted.

Malaher nodded. "That is the modern theory—that they were all epileptic women. They inhaled some gas which spurted out of the rock."

"Confound your pathology!" I broke in.

"Let the illusions go," he said. "It opens many doors."

It wrinkles up the youth of the world, I thought. But as Malaher went on I knew that the spirit of Romance was still abroad.

II.

"I called for Miss Wanless at three the next afternoon to take her to the monastery. She was housed in a deserted potash-burner's hut, which I had cleaned out for her. There is no inn at Mishi Rhotang.

"The black temple of the Bon-pa lamas is built on terraces down the hillside, one block above another, each with its idol-room and courtyard and colonnade and lamas' cells. In the distance the masts of the praying flags scattered among the golden roofs made me think of argosies at rest in some barbaric old-world harbour, and there were slabs of black marble above the lintels, and hanging black skins about the eaves, and chopped brushwood smeared with red earth like paint, supporting the roofs all round. Groups of lamas were standing

outside; they turned and followed us. We threaded an inquisitive crowd. Miss Wanless became more composed; her steps became slower, she looked more trim and prim as we were sucked in. She did not open her lips all the way.

"They had spread mats for us on the lowest terrace; the epileptic was to descend from above. We found the black-caps assembled, and some shaven polls of other orders drawn there for the mystery show. It was a gala day. Their yellow robes made bright patches in the dingy crowd. Every eye was turned on us.

"It appeared that the diviner was not yet 'inspired'—or intoxicated, to speak more exactly. He might not descend for hours. 'He is not yet in the radiant state,' Miss Wanless explained to me quietly. She called her interpreter and we asked him questions. I learnt how they train their spirit-men: frighten them when they are children, frighten the epileptic mothers of them before they are born, half-starve them, and shut them up for months in the dark alone, and then feed them on burning chillies and *charas* and what-not, until they see spirits in their dreams, and do not know whether they are asleep or awake, or what is visionary or real.

"We must have been there an hour when there was a stir by the porch of the temple, and a sinewy young monk drew out the car which the epileptic was to enter—a kind of flimsy sentry-box with doors, built on three rough wooden wheels, two in front and one behind. Then a lane was made by the gate where we had come in, and we saw the temple buffalo approaching. It was an ancient beast, whose skin was all sockets, cracking with age and covered with a venerable down; and its eyes had an uncanny way of looking up when, by the poise of its head, they ought to be looking on the ground, and they were a bright, light, forget-me-not blue, like a child's, as if the beast had preserved a new-born, inquiring innocence in his primeval wallow. They yoked the murky brute to the car and drove him into the middle of the courtyard, where he stood immovable. You could see the long grey lashes in the sockets of his eyes.

"Another hour passed, and they brought out a gross golden female idol, and put it in the car, with its back to the buffalo. The epileptic was not to ride alone.

"From time to time Miss Wanless called the interpreter and asked him when 'the sensitive' was coming. She referred to the loathsome savage all the while as 'the sensitive,' 'the psychic,' 'the medium.'

"'What do they call him?' I asked the man.

"'Hui-ma-mblen-Karpo.'

"'What does that mean?'

"'The Finder of Lost Things.'

"I looked at Miss Wanless, and saw in the brightening of her eyes the triumph of an instinct confirmed. Then it

entered my head for the first time that the epileptic might find her brother.

"She was saying something about the psychic when a lama came up to ask me if we would drink the monastery tea. I said 'No' politely, but vainly, for a monk with a face like a lichened gargoyle was already bearing down on us with cups. They brought us the inevitable Tibetan *tsamba* and brick tea, with butter and mutton-fat floating in it. I admired my companion's composure more and more. She lifted her veil, touched the broth with her lips, and restrained the muscles of her face. She might have been calling somewhere: from her shoes to the buckle in her hat she was pure Twickenham.

"The wild monks all round were staring at her as men in civilised countries look through glass at mummies and stuffed birds, but she was unmoved. It was odd to turn from that Mongol crowd to her plain, straight, stolid, equine face, honest and compassionate. There were dark rims under the eyes; the lashes were almost invisible, being the same hue as her skin; her hair had been a dull yellow, but there was grey in it. I felt strangely drawn to the woman, though there was nothing pleasing in her looks save her unalterable homeliness and her true eyes. You could see at a glance that she had faith.

"It was an interminable afternoon, and I dozed for very weariness. I was translated by my companion to the High Street and the trams, to Bushey Park and the iron gate in front of Hampton Court. The lamas receded with their peaked caps and praying-wheels, and Miss Wanless passed from shop to shop carrying a little green bag. She led a small, curly-haired dog by a string.

"It was almost dark when I was awakened from my reverie by a loud commotion, and heard her say, 'He is coming!' Some one fired a gun from the terrace over us, and the hubbub in the courtyard became a subdued drone. We heard demoniac cries and the clanging of doors above. We saw him sway like a drunken man into the verandah of an upper storey.

"As he drew near us, a blare of wind-instruments, conch-shells, and a kind of horn blown within, deadened the sound of his coming. He appeared at the door of the idol-house, a young man, his head bare and cropped, his hide like loose wrinkled parchment clinging to the bones of his cheek—a peculiar unhealthy colour, the bright skin-yellow of the ball of the foot. He was crying out something, but the din of the instruments drowned his voice. He circled round the ring of monks, peering into each face with a vague searching look and passing on. He passed me by, but stood ten seconds in front of Miss Wanless, fixing her with strange intentness. She did not flinch, but gave him one direct glance.

Then she held her knees tightly, and looked on the ground.

"The music quickened with a clash of drums and cymbals; the conches and horns wailed discordantly; the oracle broke into a slow rhythmic step, shaking his head from left to right, and revolving with outstretched arms. The old men behind headed him to the car as one might drive a goose into a narrow lane. . . .

"When he entered the box it began to shake and sway; two voices issued from it; the buffalo plunged clumsily to the goad. The sinewy young lama ran beside to head the beast off the ring, so that the car, veering continually, passed under us again and again. As it plunged along behind the goaded brute, the old lamas shambled after it, their peaked caps bobbing to the din.

"Miss Wanless clutched me by the arm.

"'Can they hear what the sensitive says?' she asked. And the catch in her voice was her one betrayal of emotion the whole afternoon.

"The oracle spoke in an unknown tongue; it was some dead cult of which he remembered nothing after the possession had passed. If it were not for the old priests who ran behind the message would be lost.

"It grew dark, and we saw two little points of light in the air in front of the car like a reflection in water of the beast's luminous eyes. Then the goad ceased to ply, the shriek of the conches expired, the car slackened and stopped. The lamas rushed to the box, opened it, and carried the unconscious soothsayer—wounded by collision with the goddess—into the temple. The golden idol was left lolling out of the door.

"We waited some time in suspense; our interpreter had followed in the rout and was lost. Every now and then a monk came and bawled something into our ears, and seeing we did not understand, bawled it louder, lowering his head like a bull. At last, the lantern-jawed little man appeared and delivered us the oracle:—

"'He is alive, but near death. Go to the snow peak beyond Romi Chungpo. Two hours after sunset look westward for a sign.'

III.

"So far I had been humouring a child, but now my whole heart was in the business. Nothing mattered but the finding of Wanless. And Miss Wanless! Only a day or two before I had pitied her unattractiveness. Later I came to know that her stubborn obstinate look of having sunk in where she sat or stood, hid a shyness and hesitation in little things common in sensitive women who lack charm. In big things—like faith and grit

and resolution—she was sure and firm.

"Before noon the next day we had started for Romi Chungpo. Miss Wanless would not lose an hour. She would not stay at Mishi Rhotang and let me make a reconnaissance ahead. It was a dangerous country to traverse—she did not know how dangerous. Three out of the eight white men who had entered it in the last ten years had been murdered; and on the third day we had to cross a tract of the Lolo country.

"Things were made easy at the start. I had friends among the local chiefs who had been out shooting with me and borrowed my guns. And I think Miss Wanless had made a good impression. Her largess had been ample; she had approached their mysteries in a reverent spirit, and she possessed the stolid calm of one of their idols—a calmness invaluable in an errand like this."

Malaher paused and looked at the boy.

"You know," he said, "a man is safe almost anywhere if he can keep his temper, and a woman more safe."

The boy shuffled in his chair; his spurs were yet to win; he was wondering if his hot blood would stand the test.

"In the presence of a composure like that," Malaher went on, "violence is unthinkable. Miss Wanless would be safe among the Senussi. She could walk right through the Danakil country — or rather, she could be carried, and that requires pluck of another kind.

"I cannot tell you how stiff and awkward and clumsy she was. She had never played any kind of game. You could not imagine her leaving the pavement or high road; you would think a stile or a plank-bridge an insuperable barrier. Yet she got through somehow to Romi Chungpo; and the track was carried over torrents bridged by rotten logs, where there was a hundred-foot drop into the stream, and along the face of precipices where you balanced on slender pine trunks supported by pegs driven into crevices in the rock, or hanging by knotted vines from boughs above. I have no head for precipices myself, and I should have liked to have been dragged along by a rope if I had dared. It made me sick to see them carry Miss Wanless over. We would come to a place where the path ended, and some broken goat-track traversed a hanging cliff, when she would sit down and tie a band of white tape round her skirt above the ankles for delicacy's sake. She had none of the clothes women wear for golf or shooting, tweed knicker-bockers, putties, nailed boots, and short skirts. She was dressed for the High Street and the Stores. But she had the knack of making herself stiff and unresisting, so that the little hill men could carry her across, one in front and one behind, wheel-barrow fashion, with a foot in each hand. She shut her eyes and resigned herself. She seemed to will away fear and become marble. I shall

never forget that sacrificial look.

"I would sit and wait my turn to traverse a narrow edge of rock above a chasm, watching the rickety procession cross — the closed, upturned lids of Miss Wanless, her tightly shut mouth. I never realised so feelingly how indifferent the great and permanent forces of nature are to our midget lives. The unceasing roar of the torrent beneath was a cruel undersong.

"We reached Romi Chungpo without mishap on the sixth day; the peak was two days beyond. The roughness of the way made us forget the danger from the tribes. We crossed the Lolo tract unchallenged; the country was deserted; every male had been carried off on one of those perennial border frays against the neighbouring clans.

"At Romi Chungpo I tried in vain to persuade Miss Wanless to rest one day, or to let me go alone to the peak and decide on the spot what it would be best to do if I could find any trace of her brother. In the strain of the journey I had hardly thought about our goal. I do not think that it occurred to either of us that he would not be there, that we might not see his watch-fire after all. Then, when the tension had passed, I became sceptical. I forgot my belief; I told myself that I had come simply to let her feel that everything had been done that could be done. I wanted to humour her, to spare her.

"You can imagine what an ass I felt two nights afterwards when we were huddled in blankets in the snow at 13,000 feet, a storm gathering round us. Miss Wanless literally sank in; she sat gazing raptly at the west, and I cursed the Finder of Lost Things, and my own folly, feeling that we were in for a night's vigil, and that nothing could dislodge her. She must have divined my dwindling faith, for she said something about 'the lucidity of trance,' and repeated more than once, 'You see, he'— meaning the medium—'was so near.'

"She was calculating his psychic power in the terms of a hertzian wave.

"I began to think about frost-bite, and was rubbing my ears and burying my head in my Balaclava cap, when I heard her cry: 'There!' I looked, and far down in the valley I saw a little glow-worm flicker, which might have been a camp-fire. I had just time to get the bearings of it on my compass, when the clouds rolled down on us and we were lost.

"We descended with pain into the dwarf rhododendrons. Here the mist was thinner. We lighted a beacon and waved signal brands, but there was no answering gleam across the valley.

"The next morning we followed the bearings I had taken until we came to a torrent we could not cross. We knew the light we had seen must be beyond it, and spent the whole day looking for a ford. It was twilight when I saw the signal.

I gave Miss Wanless the glasses and asked her what she could see. She focussed the thing and said very quietly—

"'A bag hanging on a forked pole. It is like a finger-post pointing up the side ravine.'

"The glasses shook in her hand. It was Wanless' rucksack.

"We bridged the stream the next morning. I had taken plenty of rope, knowing the kind of country to expect. Miss Wanless was lowered on to a rock in the middle of the stream, where our stoutest little man stood; he paid the rope out, and she was hauled up the other side, looking like a saint in levitation. She did not shut her eyes—she was too happy to be afraid. At the foot of the pole we found the spoor of a booted man. A little way up the ravine I smelt wood smoke. I let Miss Wanless get ahead. Then I saw a shirt hanging on a bush to dry. I sat down and was tugging at a supposititious bootlace, when I heard a sob. Only in victory did she surrender. Then, as I retreated through the scrub, I heard a man's voice not unlike her own—

"'Just like you, Emma, . . . sprained my ankle. . . . Can't get after game . . . was feeling very low and humped.'

"I botanised assiduously for an hour. When I came back Emma was bandaging his foot. He greeted me with laconic warmth. You never saw such a wild man of the woods. He wore elfin locks; his coat was patched with bark. Emma got up as I entered the shelter and stood four-square to receive me, obviously under the impression that she ought to make some appropriate speech. She looked more than ever as if she had stuck in, as if she were pressing something down. I was afraid of some demonstration, and I think Wanless detected the springs of one. He came to the rescue with a ready wit, dwelling on the humours of his plight, bringing us down to a less emotional plane.

"We patched him up inwardly and outwardly. When his ankle had been bathed I cut his hair while he smoked—a tin of his own mixture: Miss Wanless had seen to that. I gathered his story in pieces.

"He had marked down a takin on the cliffs above the ravine and crossed the torrent in heavy rain, where two huge abutting rocks had jammed in the stream; but before he could recross the bridge had been carried away by a landslip. His Shikari was killed; he escaped himself by a miracle. He cut his way down stream through the dwarf rhododendrons, thick as a mesh, till he came to another torrent, which joined the first. He was shut in on both sides by impassable gorges: up-stream the cliffs fell smooth and sheer, slippery as ice. There were no trees near the bank, and bridging was out of the question till the torrent had shrunk in winter. So he built up the old herb-gatherer's shelter in which we found him, and lived

on the takin he shot—the meat kept well in the snow—and wild onions and rhubarb and honey and an occasional snow-trout.

"He made light of it, but I think he would have starved if we had not found him. He had sprained an ankle, and could not get about. He had no matches, and was afraid to trust to tinder in the rain. He kept his fire burning night and day, hoping that it might be seen. 'It was always in his thoughts,' Miss Wanless explained. 'He wished it desperately and prayed every day: "May some Christian see my fire!" I knew if only we could find a medium near enough——'

"Wanless gave her a gaunt smile.

"'Surely, Emma,' he said, 'you don't believe in that rubbish still.'"

Malaher rose and stretched himself, and knocked the ashes out of his brier for a last fill. As he put the totem back on the pipe-rack he said to the boy, rather unkindly, I thought—

"You see, I am still open to conviction about psychical research."

A COMPANY OF TANKS.

BY MAJOR W. H. L. WATSON, D.S.O., D.C.M.,

Author of 'Adventures of a Despatch Rider.'

CHAPTER VIII.—THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES—ST JULIEN.

(August 1917.)

THE opening moves of the battle were not too fortunate. The first objectives were gained on the left and in the centre, but the cost was high. The Welsh Division in particular suffered heavily: the enemy had learned the Welsh plan of attack. On the right we made little impression on the western end of the Passchendaele Ridge. Once the first great onrush was over, we reverted to the old siege tactics—to blow a trench system to pieces and then to occupy it under cover of a thick barrage. The rain came down, and the whole battlefield, torn up already by our guns, became impassable. We advanced more slowly. The enemy brought up every spare gun, and the artilleries hammered away mechanically day and night, while the wretched infantry on either side lay crouched in flooded shell-holes. The preliminary bombardments became longer, and the objectives of the infantry more limited. Soon the attacks ominously began to fail—at Hooge and Polygon Wood attack after attack had broken on the enemy defences. "Pill-boxes," little forts of concrete, proved at first almost impregnable. The enemy could congratulate themselves that they had brought to a standstill the great British attack of the year.

That was the first stage. Then there were changes in command and in tactics. The Second Army extended its front to the north, and Plumer began slowly to solve the problem with the aid of a little fine weather. Tactics were adapted to the nature of the ground and the character of the enemy defences. Tanks were at last permitted to use the roads. The Australians were "put in" on the Passchendaele Ridge. Once again the vast creaking machine began to move slowly forward, but very slowly. We reached the outskirts of the Houthulst Forest; we crawled along the top of the ridge and to the north of it. At last we were within reach of Passchendaele itself, and we had hopes of Roulers. . . .

It was too late. The weather definitely had broken: the Italians were pouring back to the Piave: the Russians had left us to ourselves. November had come, and to distract the enemy's attention we made a strong little effort down at

Cambrai. When the corpse of Passchendaele finally was taken, we were occupied with other things.

We had forced the enemy back at Ypres six or seven miles in three and a half months. Our casualties, I believe, had amounted to a quarter of a million. The Salient had indeed preserved its reputation, and that grim spirit who broods over the hills beyond Ypres must have smiled maliciously when in a few months we were again compelled to withdraw our lines.

In the third battle of Ypres the reputation of the Tank Corps was almost destroyed. When we went south to Cambrai we must have left behind us two or three hundred derelict tanks sinking by degrees into the mud. The fighting virtues of the crews could not be questioned, for the gallantry of the corps was amazing. Time after time the men started out to fight in the full knowledge that unless some miracle intervened they must stick in the mud—and either spend hours under a deadly fire endeavouring to extricate their tanks or fight on, the target of every gun in the neighbourhood, until they were knocked to pieces. There was the famous tank "Fray Bentos," which went out in front of our infantry and ditched. The crew fought for seventy-two hours, bombed, shelled, and stormed by day and by night, until, when all of them were wounded, they gave up hope that the infantry ever would reach them and crawled back to our own lines.

Then it was decided that the tanks might use the roads. This must not be misunderstood. A civilian could search for a road in the forward area and not recognise it when he came to it, if it had not been for the tree stumps at the side, and often the tree trunks across it. The roads had been shelled to destruction, like everything else in that ghastly, shattered country, but they possessed at least some sort of foundation which prevented the tanks from sinking into the mud. Operating on the roads, we had one or two little successes—a mixed company of "G" battalion surprised and captured a few pill-boxes at a ridiculously low cost, and later the 10th Company, "D" Battalion, carried out a splendid feat in moving from St Julien, assisting the infantry to capture half the village of Poelcapelle and some strong points near, and then returning to St Julien with all tanks intact and two men wounded.

It would require a partial historian to assert that the tanks seriously affected the course of the battle. Every action was a deadly gamble, and soon the infantry realised as transparently as the stout-hearted crews that, in the Salient, a company of tanks, however skilfully driven and gallantly fought, could not be relied upon at need. And the divisions, which came up in the later stages of the battle, had only to use their eyes. It is not very encouraging to

pass a succession of derelict tanks. Luckily for the future of the Corps, the infantryman was generous enough to attribute at least part of our failures to the appalling ground. The average infantry officer could not understand why on earth tanks had ever been brought to the Salient. We made the most of our successes and said nothing of our failures. Then came the battle of Cambrai, and those poor old battered derelicts, rusting in the mud, were forgotten . . . After all, not only the tanks failed in the Third Battle of Ypres. . . .

I have given this little picture of the battle in order that the reader, spoon-fed on journalese, may not come to my story under the delusion that this tragic battle was a glorious victory. The details of operations he may find elsewhere: a proper history of the tank corps may soon be written: the careful critic may find my dates inaccurate. I want to give the atmosphere in which we fought, and this battle was a gloomy, bitter business. . . .

On the 31st July, the first day of the battle, it began to rain, and it rained until August 6th, and then it rained again. We, who were in Corps reserve, had nothing to do except to wait restlessly in our camp—we might receive orders to move up at any moment, if the enemy line gave any indication of breaking; but, although on our Corps front we had successfully reached our objectives, and the Pilkem Ridge, from which we had been driven by gas in April '15, was once more in our hands, the German defence remained intact. It was clear that the enemy, who, like us, had made every possible preparation, must once again be thrown back by sheer force. And the continual downpour made the task day by day more difficult. The more it rained, the more necessary a prolonged preliminary bombardment became, and a lengthy bombardment made the ground increasingly unsuitable for the use of tanks. It was an altogether vicious circle.

The necessity, however, for a series of siege attacks with limited objectives relieved the tension for us, and the rain, which gravely hindered all preparations, postponed indefinitely the day on which my company, the reserve company of the reserve battalion, would come into action. We again made a thorough overhaul of our tanks, and fearing that the officers and men might become stale, I granted generous leave out of camp.

The war for us consisted in watching the arrival of prisoners at the Army Cage, which was just round the corner; in putting out our lights when the enemy 'planes came over; in reconnoitring once again our routes forward; in making little expeditions to neighbouring towns when the strain of waiting became too insistent. . . .

There was no hate in our hearts for the gangs of prisoners who, on the morning and

afternoon of every attack, poured miserably along the Poperinghe road. They looked such wretched, sullen outcasts. Even the pride of the officers—a quaint ridiculous dignity—was a little pitiful. When the gangs halted by the roadside, just by the camp, it was impossible at first to prevent our men from giving them tea and cigarettes, though later this practice was sternly forbidden. In some ways we treated these prisoners well. When we drew biscuits instead of bread, we would always say that a fresh batch of prisoners must have arrived. But the Cage itself rapidly became a swamp, and we sympathised, in spite of ourselves, with the poor devils lying out in the mud. I used to wonder in the following year whether those of our men who were taken prisoner looked as unutterably woebegone as these Germans, or whether, perhaps, they bore themselves better. . . .

The bombing at night, even back at La Lovie, was an infernal nuisance. During August it rapidly developed, and it reached its height towards the middle of September. We possessed, apparently, no means of defence against it. The "Archies" seemed useless. Machine-gun fire was effective only when the 'planes flew daringly low. The enemy came over when he liked, and we could not understand why he did not show himself more frequently.

We in our camp were only annoyed—never damaged, and we began to treat it all rather as a joke. Then the two Casualty Clearing Stations on the railway were bombed. Several nurses, moving quietly among the screaming wounded, were killed. We hoped that it was a terrible mistake, but the hospitals were deliberately bombed a second time, and the ghastly scenes were repeated. I do not know whether in very shame we invented some shadow of excuse, but it was rumoured at this time that, in our nightly shelling of Roulers Station, a shell had dropped into the German Hospital near by, and that the enemy were now retaliating. I do not vouch for this explanation, and it is quite probably an invention. Apart from the hospitals, we heard of little damage done by bombs. . . .

The heavy rain had made the reconnaissance of approach routes to Ypres and the Canal the hardest labour. The tracks had been churned up by passing tanks until they were knee-deep in mud — not the slimy, oozy kind, but the damp spongy mud which sticks. In spite of the rain it was a month of close muggy days, and these tramps through the steaming, odorous mud were a very sore infliction. But the routes were so various, wandering, and difficult that the most thorough reconnaissance was necessary. At any rate we acquired a knowledge of the countryside, and the more we saw of it the less we loved it.

Once the country must have been rough heath, with big woods, isolated clumps of firs, and everywhere stagnant pools

and dirty streams. Then the painstaking natives took hold of it and determined to make a living out of it. They cultivated and cultivated with meticulous care. In the back areas hops, corn, turnips, beans, market gardens, all in their enclosures, came right up to the roads and the woods, but forward all the country was returning to heath. Little cottages or farms lined all the roads or stood at the corners of the fields, while, farther back again, the main roads were fringed with queer temporary bungalows or shelters, where the *evacués* eked out a livelihood by selling food, cigarettes, vegetables, or bad beer to the troops, or by making coarse lace.

Now fill every wood with camps and every open space with dumps or parks, cover the country with such a close network of railways that there is a level-crossing every three hundred yards along any road, and block all the roads with transport. Further forward there are guns everywhere—behind cottages, in houses, along hedges, camouflaged in the open. . . .

The country seemed out of proportion. The fields were so small, the hedges so numerous, the roads so narrow. . . . It was a battlefield over allotments, cultivated on a marshy heath.

Cooper and I would go beyond the Canal and gaze at the villages which we might attack. It has always fascinated me to see the inviolate country—the pleasant green fields and nice red houses behind the enemy line that must, when we advance, become a brown shell-pocked desert and shapeless heaps of rubble. In the old trench battles we achieved victory by destruction. The houses and fields stood terrified at our advance, praying that it would be stopped, so that they could be spared. We looked through our glasses at Passchendaele and Westroosebeke, standing on the ridge. It was a clear day and the villages might have been in Surrey. By the end of November they were nothing but a few bricks and stones lying about in the mud.

These little expeditions forward to convenient Observation Posts had their excitements. The Canal was curiously the frontier of the war. On this side of the Canal it was peaceful enough save for a deafening railway-gun, a super-heavy howitzer, and a chance shell from the enemy. On that side it seemed that all the guns in the world were packed together, and the enemy, when he became annoyed, shelled the whole area indiscriminately. We had one particularly bad day. . . .

By the last week in August it had been found impossible for tanks successfully to operate over the open country of the Salient, and they were tied strictly to the remains of roads. . . .

On the front which concerned my battalion we had driven the enemy back over the Pilkem Ridge into the valley of the Hannebeek, and

at the foot of the further slopes he was holding out successfully in a number of "pill-boxes" and concreted ruins. St Julien itself was ours, a little village along the main road to Poelcapelle at the crossing of the stream. Beyond, the ground was so ravaged with shell-fire that it had become a desert stretch of shell-holes, little stagnant pools, with here and there an odd hedge or a shattered tree. The enemy defences, which consisted of strong points skilfully linked up by fortified shell-holes, overlooked the opposite slope, and our guns were compelled to remain behind the shelter of the Pilkem crest.

A few of the strong points on the west of the main road, notably the "Cookroft," had already been cleared by a mixed company of "G" Battalion in a successful little action. The tanks, using the roads, had approached the forts from the rear, and the garrisons in their panic had surrendered almost without a fight.

Ward's company had made a similar attack along the road running east from the village. On the day before the action the enemy had spotted his tanks, which were "lying up" on the western slope of the Pilkem Ridge, and had attempted to destroy them with a hurricane bombardment of 5.9's, but a tank has as many lives as a cat, and only three or four were knocked out, though the flanks of the remainder were scarred and dented with splinters.

The action itself was typical of many a tank action in the Salient. The tanks slipped off the road and became irretrievably ditched, sinking into the marsh. They were knocked out by direct hits as they nosed their way too slowly forward. One gallant tank drew up alongside a "pill-box," stuck, and fought it out. We never quite knew what happened, but at last the tank caught fire. The crew never returned.

The road out of St Julien was littered with derelicts, for tanks of another battalion, endeavouring by that road to reach another part of the battlefield, had met their fate.

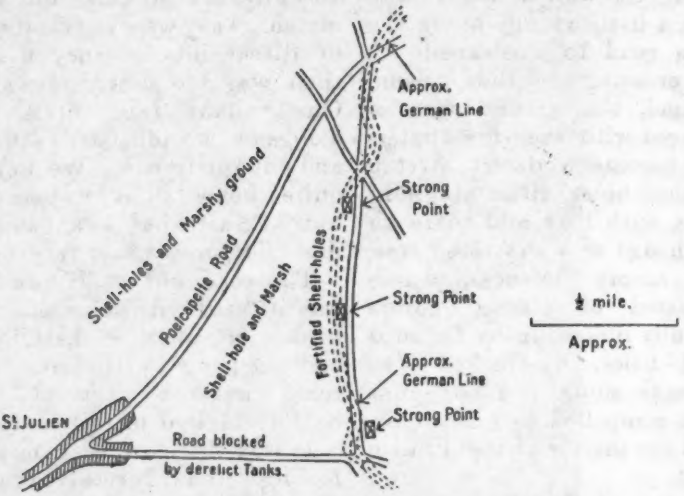
It was therefore with mixed feelings that I received the order to get ready a section with a view to co-operating with the infantry in an attack on the same front.

I had already moved my company without incident to the Canal, where they remained peacefully, camouflaged under the trees.

I selected for the enterprise Wyatt's section, which, it will be remembered, had fought on the extreme right at the First Battle of Bullecourt. His four tanks were at this time commanded by Puttock, Edwards, Sartin, and Lloyd. It was a good section.

First, we consulted with the G.S.O.I. of the Division, which lived in excellent dug-outs on the banks of the canal. The infantry attack was planned in the usual way—the German positions were to be stormed under cover of the thickest possible barrage.

We were to attack practically the same positions which Ward's company had so gallantly attempted to take. The direct road, perhaps luckily, was blocked by derelicts. A rough diagram will make the position clear:—



It will be obvious that since my tanks could not leave the road, and the direct road was blocked, it became necessary to use the main road across the enemy front and attack the strong points down the road from the north. Further, the tanks could not move out of St Julien before "zero" in case the noise of their engines should betray the coming attack. We were reduced, in consequence, to a solemn crawl along the main road in sight of the enemy after the battle had commenced.

We decided boldly to spend the night before the battle at St Julien. We had realised by then that the nearer we were to the enemy the less likely we were to be shelled. And the idea of a move down the road into St Julien actually on the night before the battle was not pleasant. No margin of time would be left for accidents, mechanical or otherwise.

Cooper, Wyatt, and I carried out a preliminary reconnaissance into the outskirts of St Julien on a peaceful day before coming to our decision. The sun was shining brightly after the rain, and the German gunners were economising their ammunition after an uproar on the night before, the results of which we saw too plainly in the dead men lying in the mud along the roadside. Wyatt made a more detailed reconnaissance by night and planned exactly where he would put each tank.

On the night of the 25th/26th August Wyatt's section moved across the Canal and up along a track to an inconspicuous halting-place on the

western side of the crest. It was raining, and, as always, the tracks were blocked with transport. An eager gunner endeavoured to pass one of the tanks, but his gun caught the sponson and slipped off into the mud. It was a weary, thankless trek.

On the following night the tanks crawled cautiously down the road into St Julien with engines barely turning over for fear the enemy should hear them. The tanks were camouflaged with the utmost care.

The enemy aeroplanes had little chance to see them, for on the 27th it rained. A few shells came over, but the tanks were still safe and whole on the night before the battle, when a storm of wind and rain flooded the roads and turned the low ground beyond the village, which was treacherous at the best of times, into a slimy quagmire.

Before dawn on the 28th the padre walked from ruin to ruin, where the crews had taken cover from shells and the weather, and administered the Sacrament to all who desired to partake of it. The crews stood to their tanks. Then, just before sunrise, came the whine of the first shells, and our barrage fell on the shell-holes in which the enemy, crouched and sodden, lay waiting for our attack. The German gunners were alert, and the counter-barrage fell beyond the village to prevent reinforcements from coming forward. Big shells crashed into St Julien. The tanks swung out of their lairs in the dust and smoke, and, moving clear of the village, advanced steadily in the dim light along the desolate road, while the padre and Wyatt slipped back through the counter-barrage to brigade headquarters.

It was lonely on the Poelcapelle Road, with nothing for company but shells bursting near the tanks. After the heavy rain the tanks slipped about on the broken setts, and every shell-hole in the road was a danger—one lurch, and the tank would slide off into the marsh.

Very slowly the tanks picked their way. Three tanks reached the cross-roads. The fourth, Lloyd's, scraped a tree-trunk, and the mischief was done. The tank sidled gently off the road and stuck, a target for the machine-gunners. Two of the crew crept out, and the unditching beam was fixed on to the tracks. The tank heaved, moved a few inches, and sank more deeply. Another effort was made, but the tank was irretrievably ditched, half a mile from the German lines.

Three tanks turned to the right at the first cross-roads, and, passing through our infantry, enfiladed the shell-holes occupied by the enemy. The effect of the tanks' fire could not be more than local. The enemy were soon compelled to run back from the shell-holes near the road, and many dropped into the mud; but machine-gun fire from the shell-holes, which the guns of the tanks could not reach

effectively, prevented a further advance.

One tank moved south down the track towards the strong points, but found it blocked by a derelict tank which the enemy had blown neatly into two halves. My tank remained there for an hour, shooting at every German who appeared. Then the tank commander tried to reverse in order to take another road, but the tank, in reversing, slid on to a log and slipped into a shell-hole, unable to move. One man was mortally wounded by a splinter.

The barrage had passed on and the infantry were left floundering in the mud. The enemy seized the moment to make a counter-attack, two bunches of Germans working their way forward from shell-hole to shell-hole on either side of the tank. Our infantry, already weakened, began to withdraw to their old positions.

The tank commander learned by a runner, who on his adventurous little journey shot two Germans with his revolver, that the second tank was also ditched a few hundred yards away on another road. This tank, too, had cleared the shell-holes round it, and, bolting the garrison of a small strong point near it with its 6-pdr. gun, caught them as they fled with machine-gun fire.

There was nothing more to be done. The tanks were in full view of the German observers, and the enemy gunners were now trying for direct hits. The tanks must be hit, sooner or later. The infantry were withdrawing. The two wretched subalterns in that ghastly waste of shell-holes determined to get their men away before their tanks were hit or completely surrounded. They destroyed what was of value in their tanks, and carrying their Lewis guns and some ammunition, they dragged themselves wearily back to the main road.

The remaining tank, unable to move forward as all the roads were now blocked, cruised round the triangle of roads to the north of the strong points. Then a large shell burst just in front of the tank and temporarily blinded the driver. The tank slipped off the road into the mud, jamming the track against the trunk of a tree. All the efforts of the crew to get her out were in vain. . . .

Meanwhile, we had been sitting drearily near Divisional Headquarters on the canal bank in the hope that by a miracle my tanks might succeed and return. The morning wore on, and there was little news. The Germans shelled us viciously. It was not until my tank commanders returned to report that we knew the attack had failed.

When the line had advanced a little, Cooper and I went forward to reconnoitre the road to Poelcapelle and to see our derelicts. Two of the tanks had been hit. A third was sinking into the mud. In the last was a heap of evil-smelling corpses. Either men who had been gassed had crawled into the tank to die, or more likely,

men having taken shelter, were gassed where they sat. The shell-holes near by contained half-decomposed bodies that had slipped into the stagnant water. The air was full of putrescence and the strong odour of foul mud. There was no one in sight except the dead. A shell came screaming over and plumped dully into the mud without exploding. Here and there was a little rusty wire, climbing in and out of the shell-holes like noisome weeds. A few yards away a block of mud-coloured concrete grew naturally out of the mud. An old entrenching tool, a decayed German pack, a battered tin of bully, and a broken rifle lay at our feet. We crept away hastily. The dead never stirred.

CHAPTER IX.—THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES—THE POELCAPELLE ROAD.

(September and October 1917.)

For three weeks there was no big offensive, though the artilleries continued their pitiless duel without a break, and the miserable infantry, tormented by bombs and shells as they crouched in their water-logged holes, or staggering dully over the mud in a series of little local attacks, which too often failed, could scarcely have realised that there was a distinct lull in the battle. We were pulling ourselves together for another enormous effort. The guns were pushed forward, and more guns arrived. Tired Divisions were taken out and new Divisions took their place with reduced fronts. There were new groupings, new tactics. . . . A possible month of fighting weather remained. We might still make something of this tragic struggle.

My company had returned from the Canal, as it was not likely that we should be wanted again in the near future, and were living in shameless comfort at La Lovie. The rain had stopped—we always had bright sunshine in the Salient, when we were not ready to attack. If it had not been for the growl of the guns, an occasional shell in Poperinghe while we were bargaining for greengages, or the perseverance of the enemy airmen, who dropped bombs somewhere in the neighbourhood each fine night, we might have forgotten the war completely. There were walks through the pinewoods, canters over the heath, thrilling football matches against our rivals, little expeditions to Bailleul for fish, or Cassel for a pleasant dinner in the cool of the evening. And I fell in with Susie.

She was a dear, graceful little woman, with timid, liquid brown eyes, black hair, a pleasant mouth, and the most marvellous teeth. Our friendship began one night when, returning from mess, I found her sitting on my bed.

It is better to be frank. She was half a German—at least we all thought so, because, if she had no dachshund blood in her, she had no other strain in her that we could recognise.

Then there was the Brigade barber across the way, who came from Bond Street. He had been given his own little shop, and he possessed such a store of the barber's polite conversation that to listen was to become home-sick. Sometimes, as we were in Flanders, he would flavour his stories a little fully, ending always with a half-apology—

"A topic, sir, I can assure you, that I should scarcely have approached, if it had not been for my eighteen months in the ranks."

His little deprecating cough was pure joy. . . .

On the 19th the weather broke again, and it rained heavily. On the 20th we delivered an attack in the grand style, with every man and gun available. For a few days we were full of hope. The enemy could not resist our sheer strength, and their line bent and almost broke. We threw in Division after Division, attacking day after day. We thrust him back to the fringes of the Houthulst Forest. We crawled along the Passchendaele Ridge, and on the 26th we captured Zonnebeke. Then slowly and magnificently the Germans steadied themselves, and once more the attacks died down with the enemy line still in being. But the Great General Staff must have had a terrible fright.

Ward's company had been engaged between the Poelcapelle Road and Langemarck. Much to my disgust I had been compelled to hand over to him two of my best tanks. His company did excellent work, though, as had become customary in the Salient, only a few of his tanks returned. One tank particularly distinguished itself by climbing a barricade of logs which had been built to block the road a few hundred yards south of Poelcapelle, and slaughtering its defenders.

At the end of September we had driven back the enemy, on the front with which I was principally concerned, to a position immediately in front of Poelcapelle—that is, just over a mile N.E. of the cross-roads near which Wyatt's section had fought at the end of August. Our progress in a month, though we thought it to be satisfactory at the time, had not been astonishingly rapid. It was determined to clear Poelcapelle as soon as possible, since, while the Germans held it, we were greatly handicapped in attacking either the S.E. edge of the Houthulst Forest or the Passchendaele Ridge itself from the north-west. Further, the only two main roads in the neighbourhood passed through the village.

Marris, who had succeeded Haskett-Smith in the command of No. 10 Company, was instructed to assist the infantry in the attack. His

company had just returned from Wailly, where they had greatly improved their driving by hard practice over the derelict trenches. They had suffered few casualties at Arras, and, as they had not previously been engaged in the Salient, they were fresh and keen.

The attack was scheduled for October 4th. Marris brought down his tanks into St Julien and camouflaged them in the ruins. St Julien, though still easily within close field-gun range, was now respectably "behind the line." It was only shelled once or twice a night, and during the day on state occasions. It could not hope entirely to escape—the bridge across the Hannebeek was too important—but it became the place at which you left the car if you wanted to reconnoitre forward.

The attack was incredibly successful. Of Marris's twelve tanks, eleven left St Julien and crawled perilously all night along the destroyed road. At dawn they entered the village with the infantry and cleared it after difficult fighting. One section even found their way along the remains of a track so obliterated by shell-fire that it scarcely could be traced on the aeroplane photographs, and "bolted" the enemy from a number of strong points. Then, having placed the infantry in possession of their objectives, the tanks lurched back in the daylight. It was a magnificent exhibition of good driving, which has never been surpassed, and was without doubt the most successful operation in the Salient carried out by tanks.

Unfortunately the tanks could not remain in the village. By midday every German gun which could bear had been turned upon it, and by dusk the enemy had forced their way back into the ruins at the farther end of the long street.

It soon became clear that we should be required to finish the job. The weather, of course, changed. A few days of drying sun and wind were followed by gales and heavy rain. The temperature dropped. At night it was bitterly cold.

On the 6th, Cooper and I made a little expedition up the Poelcapelle Road. It was in a desperate condition, and we felt a most profound respect for the drivers of No. 10 Company. The enemy gunners had shelled it with accuracy. There were great holes that compelled us to take to the mud at the side. In places the surface had been blown away, so that the road could not be distinguished from the treacherous riddled waste through which it ran. To leave the road was obviously certain disaster for a tank. Other companies had used it, and at intervals derelict tanks which had slipped off the road or received direct hits were sinking rapidly in the mud. I could not help remembering that the enemy must be well aware of the route which so many tanks had followed into battle.

We were examining a particularly large shell-hole, between two derelict tanks, when the enemy, whose shells had been falling at a reasonable distance, began to shell the road. . . .

Two sections of my tanks—Talbot's and Skinner's—had moved forward once more from the Canal, and were safely camouflaged in St Julien by dawn on the 8th. All the tank commanders and their first drivers had reconnoitred the road from St Julien to the outskirts of Poelcapelle. The attack was to be made at 5.20 A.M. on the 9th. The tanks were ordered to enter Poelcapelle with the infantry and drive the enemy out of the houses which they still held.

I was kept at La Lovie until dusk for my final instructions. I started in my car, intending to drive to Wieltje, two miles from St Julien, but Organ was away, and I found to my disgust that my temporary driver could not see in the dark. Naturally, no lights were allowed on the roads, and the night was black with a fluster of rain. After two minor collisions on the farther side of Vlamertinghe I gave up the car as useless, and tramped the two and a half miles into Ypres. The rain held off for an hour, and a slip of moon came out to help me.

I walked through the pale ruins, and, though the enemy had ceased to shell Ypres regularly, fear clung to the place. For once there was little traffic, and in the side streets I was desperately alone. The sight of a military policeman comforted me, and, leaving the poor broken houses behind, I struck out along the St Jean road, which the enemy were shelling, to remind me, perhaps, that there could still be safety in Ypres.

It began to rain steadily and the moon disappeared. I jumped into an empty ambulance to escape from the rain and the shells, but beyond St Jean there was a bad block in the traffic; so, leaving the ambulance, I wormed my way through the transport, and, passing the big guns on the near side of the crest which the enemy had held for so many years, I splashed down the track into St Julien. I only stumbled into one shell-hole, but I fell over a dead mule in trying to avoid its brother. It was a pitch-black night.

We had decided to use for our headquarters a perfectly safe "pill-box," or concreted house in St Julien, but when we arrived we discovered that it was already occupied by a dressing station. We could not stand upon ceremony—we shared it between us.

Soon after I had reached St Julien, weary, muddy, and wet, the enemy began to shell the village persistently. One shell burst just outside our door. It killed two men and blew two into our chamber, where, before they had realised they were hit, they were bandaged and neatly labelled.

My crews, who had been resting in our camp by the Canal, arrived in the middle of

the shelling, and, paying no attention to it whatever, began to uncover their tanks and drive them out from the ruins where they had been hidden. Luckily nobody was hurt, but the shelling continued until midnight.

By 10 P.M. the tanks had started on the night's trek, with the exception of one which had been driven so adroitly into a ruin that for several hours we could not extract it. By midnight the rain had stopped and the moon showed herself—but with discretion.

Very slowly the seven tanks picked their way to Poelcapelle. The strain was appalling. A mistake by the leading tanks, and the road might be blocked. A slip—and the tank would lurch off into the mud. The road after the rain would have been difficult enough in safety by daylight. Now it was a dark night, and, just to remind the tanks of the coming battle, the enemy threw over a shell or two.

One tank tried to cross a tree-trunk at the wrong angle. The trunk slipped between the tracks and the tank turned suddenly. The mischief was done. For half an hour S. did his best, but on the narrow slippery road he could not swing his tank sufficiently to climb the trunk correctly. In utter despair he at last drove his tank into the mud, so that the three tanks behind him might pass.

About 4 A.M. the enemy shelling increased in violence and became a very fair bombardment. The German gunners were taking no risks. If dawn were to bring with it an attack, they would see to it that the attack never developed. By 4.30 A.M. the enemy had put down a barrage on every possible approach to the forward area. And the Poelcapelle Road, along which tanks had so often endeavoured to advance, was very heavily shelled. It was anxious work, out in the darkness among the shells, on the destroyed road. . . .

In the concrete ruins we snatched a little feverish sleep in a sickly atmosphere of iodine and hot tea. A few wounded men, covered with thick mud, came in, but none were kept, so that the station might be free for the rush on the morning of the battle.

By four the gunnery had become too insistent. I did not expect Talbot to send back a runner until just before "zero," but the activity of the guns worried me. The Poelcapelle Road was no place for a tank on such a night. Still, no news was good news, for a message would have come to me if the tanks had been caught.

We went outside and stood in the rain, looking towards the line. It was still very dark, but, though the moon had left us in horror, there was a promise of dawn in the air.

The bombardment died down a little, as if the guns were taking breath, though far away to the right a barrage was throbbing. The guns barked singly. We felt a weary tension; we knew that in a

few moments something enormously important would happen, but it had happened so many times before. There was a deep shuddering boom in the distance, and a shell groaned and whined overhead. That may have been a signal. There were two or three quick flashes and reports from howitzers quite near, which had not yet fired. Then suddenly on every side of us and above us a tremendous uproar arose; the ground shook beneath us; for a moment we felt battered and dizzy; the horizon was lit up with a sheet of flashes; gold and red rockets raced madly into the sky, and in the curious light of the distant bursting shells the ruins in front of us appeared and disappeared with a touch of melodrama. . . .

We went in for a little breakfast before the wounded arrived. . . .

Out on the Poelcapelle Road, in the darkness and the rain, seven tanks were crawling very slowly. In front of each tank the officer was plunging through the shell-holes and the mud, trying hard not to think of the shells. The first driver, cursing the darkness, peered ahead or put his ear to the slit, so that he could hear the instructions of his commander above the roar of the engine. The corporal "on the brakes" sat stiffly beside the driver. One man crouched in each sponson, grasping the lever of his secondary gear, and listening for the signals of the driver, tapped on the engine-cover. The gunners sprawled listlessly, with too much time for thought, but hearing none of the shells.

S. was savagely attempting to unditch the tank which he had purposely driven into the mud.

The shells came more rapidly —in salvos, right on the road, on either side of the tanks. The officers slipped in through the sponson doors. The German gunners had decided that no tank should reach Poelcapelle that night. The tanks slithered on doggedly — they are none too easy to hit. . . .

Suddenly a shell crashed into the third tank, just as it was passing a derelict. The two tanks in front went on. Behind, four tanks were stopped. The next tank was hit on the track. It was a massacre.

The tanks could not turn, even if they had wished. There was nothing for it but to go on and attempt to pass in a rain of shells the tanks which could not move, but each in turn slipped off into the mud. Their crews, braving the shells, attached the unditching beams —fumbling in the dark with slippery spanners, while red-hot bits flew past, and they were deafened by the crashes —but nothing could be done. The officers withdrew their men from the fatal road and took cover in shell-holes. It was a stormy cheerless dawn.

The first two tanks, escaping the barrage, lurched on towards Poelcapelle. The first, delayed by an immense crater which the enemy had blown in the road, was hit and caught fire. The crew tumbled out, all of them wounded, and Skinner

brought them back across country. The second, seeing that the road in front was hopelessly blocked — for the leading tank was in the centre of the fairway—turned with great skill and attempted vainly to come back. By marvellous driving it passed the first derelict, but in trying to pass the second she slipped hopelessly into the mud. . . .

The weary night had passed with its fears, and standing in front of the ruin we looked down the road. It was bitterly cold, and tragedy hung over the stricken grey country like a mist. First a bunch of wounded came, and then in the distance we saw a tank officer with his orderly. His head was bandaged and he walked in little jerks, as if he were a puppet on a string. When he came near he ran a few steps and waved his arms. It was X., who had never been in action before.

We took him inside, made him sit down, and gave him a drink of tea. He was badly shaken, almost hysterical, but pulling himself together and speaking with a laboured clearness, he told us what had happened. His eyes were full of horror at the scene on the road. He kept apologising—his inexperience might lead him to exaggerate—perhaps he ought not to have come back, but they sent him back because he was wounded; of course, if he had been used to such things he would not have minded so much—he was sorry he could not make a better report. We heard him out and tried to cheer him by saying that, of course, these things must happen in war. Then, after he had rested a little, we sent him on, for the dressing station was filling fast, and he stumbled away painfully. I have not seen him since.

The crews had remained staunchly with their tanks, waiting for orders. I sent a runner to recall them, and in an hour or so they dribbled in, though one man was killed by a chance shell on the way. Talbot, the old dragoon, who had fought right through the war, never came back. He was mortally wounded by a shell which hit his tank. I never had a better section-commander.

We waited until late in the morning for news of Skinner, who had returned across country. The dressing station was crowded, and a batch of prisoners, cowed and grateful for their lives, were carrying loaded stretchers along trench-board tracks to a light railway a mile distant. Limbers passed through and trotted towards the line. Fresh infantry, clean and obviously straight from rest, halted in the village. The officers asked quietly for news. At last Cooper and I turned away and tramped the weary muddy miles to the Canal. The car was waiting for us, and soon we were back at La Lovie. I reported to the Colonel and to the Brigade Commander. Then I went to my hut, and, sitting on my bed, tried not to think of my tanks. Hyde, the mess-waiter, knocked at the door—

"Lunch is ready, sir, and Mr King has got some whisky from the canteen, sir!"

I shouted for hot water. . . .

The great opportunity had gone by. We had failed, and to me the sense of failure was inconceivably bitter. We began to feel that we were dogged by ill-fortune: the contrast between the magnificent achievement of Marris's company and the sudden overwhelming disaster that had swept down on my section was too glaring. And we mourned Talbot. . . .

During the next few days we made several attempts to salve our tanks or open the road by pulling them off into the mud, but the shells and circumstances proved too much for individual enterprise. In the following week, after the enemy at last had been driven beyond Poelcapelle, I sent Wyatt's section forward to St Julien, and, working under the orders of the Brigade Engineer, they managed to clear the road for the passage of transport, or, with luck and good driving, of tanks.

Later, there was a grandiose scheme for attacking Passchendaele itself and Westroosebeke from the north-west through Poelcapelle. The whole Brigade, it was planned, would advance along the Poelcapelle and Langemarck Roads and deploy in the comparatively unshelled and theoretically passable country beyond. To us, perhaps prejudiced by disaster, the scheme appeared fantastic enough: the two roads could so easily be blocked by an accident or the enemy gunners; but we never were able to know whether our fears were justified, for the remains of the Tank Corps were hurriedly collected and despatched to Wailly. . . .

The great battle of the year dragged on a little longer. In a few weeks the newspapers, intent on other things, informed their readers that Passchendaele had fallen. The event roused little comment or interest. Now, if we had reached Ostend in September . . . but it remains to be seen whether or not tanks can scale a sea-wall.

(*To be continued.*)

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

LABOUR, A SPOILT BEAUTY—THE CONGRESS AT GLASGOW—DIRECT ACTION—MR CLYNES, THE ONE MAN FIT FOR LEADERSHIP—RECKLESS DOGMATISM—THE RUSSIAN TERROR—THE NATIONALISATION OF COAL—"WAGE-SLAVERY"—THE PAUPERISING OF THE WORKING CLASS—LORD BERESFORD—SAILOR AND STATESMAN.

WHEN the Trade Union Congress met at Glasgow, Labour showed herself, as usual, in the guise of a spoilt beauty. She gave herself little airs and graces. She simpered with coquetry. By administering to herself large doses of flattery, she made it clear to the world that, in her own eyes at least, she was not like other parties. "It is well to remember," said Mr Bunning, the President of the Congress, "that many of those who are now abusing trade unions were almost tearfully appealing to them for help during the war. It is not too much to say that the enormous output of military material needed for the war could not have been attained without the cordial assistance of the trade unions concerned. That assistance was asked by responsible Ministers. It was freely given, and it is well to remind the public." Of course the aid was freely given, and it is not well to remind the public. Without the co-operation of all classes and all unions the war could not have been won. But the trade unions in fighting for the country at home were doing no more than their duty. Had they done less they would have fallen short of the rest of their contemporaries. Moreover, in doing their duty, they were saving themselves. Had they stood aloof, then Germany would have enslaved Great Britain, and made very short work of Mr Bunning and his friends.

If the trade unions had not regarded themselves as an *imperium in imperio*, Mr Bunning could not have spoken as he did. Either the trade unionists are part and parcel of the country, as we believe they are, in which case they did no more in the war than any other class, and deserve no special remembrance; or they form a State within a State, and are therefore a constant danger to the country's peace. Obviously they cannot have it both ways, and since they aspire to govern the whole Empire, to shape the lives and destinies of men wiser and better than themselves, it would be well if, instead of reminding the public of their great services, they made some attempt to discover for themselves the simple truth that the performance of a duty is not an act of grace.

And while they demand a constant procession of floral tributes, the trade unionists resent the smallest hint of

criticism. They do not like to be called "Slackers." That is natural enough. We none of us like to be abused. But the trade unionists should allow to others something of the sensitiveness which seems to afflict them. The abuse which many of them have heaped upon others, and which the ineffable Mr Smillie and his associates still heap upon those who do not agree with them, does not entitle the trade unionists to immunity from hard words. Again, they claim for themselves a privilege which they will not concede to the rest, and until they understand more clearly the meaning of sportsmanship, they cannot hope to form such a party as the whole nation will trust or support.

For the rest, we congratulate Mr G. H. Stuart-Bunning, the President, on a speech which, with the exceptions we have noted, was brave and sensible. He began by expressing "deep and reverent thankfulness" for the victory we have attained, and by paying a tribute to those who fell in the war. This exordium must have been bitter in the ears of many of those who listened to it. He went on to denounce in unmeasured terms what is known as "direct action." He pointed out that the Congress has never yet accepted the policy of a general strike, even on industrial matters, that it has never even discussed a national strike upon a political issue. What did the demand of the hot-heads mean? "The working people of this country, who had never lost hope or confidence in the blackest days of the war, were to be asked to accept the gospel of despair in the hour of victory." Worse still, the working people would be invited to a desperate gamble "with the lives of men, women, and children for the stakes." And, as Mr Bunning plainly sees, "direct action" would not only mean revolution, not only would it in the end be bound to fail, it is a confession of failure which need not be made. "There is no political reform," said he, "however far-reaching, which the working people of this country cannot achieve by the ballot-box."

While he understands why and how "direct action" must fail, Mr Bunning insists also that the country can be saved only by increased production. He admits that after the last five years of sustained effort some weariness is noticeable; and we agree with him. "It is not strange," to cite his own words, "that men who have been fighting for years in the most awful conditions should require some little time to get back their old skill and aptitude." That is true enough, and patience will prove a surer help than the slinging of abuse. Nevertheless Mr Bunning is a loyal advocate of hard work, and he asks all classes to help in it. "Let it be clearly understood," says he, "that increased output can only be obtained by the co-operation of both employers and employed, and that we are willing to do our

share." Such a statement as this is of good augury. It is not often that a trade unionist admits that the employers are living sentient beings, with whom argument is possible. And Mr Bunning, in his peroration, struck the proper note. "The great war is over," said he. "Let us not seek to carry it on in Congress or elsewhere. There is so much to do that there is no time to waste in hatred. Hate destroys, and it is our function to construct." The sequel proved how much courage was behind these simple words.

Had Mr Bunning's address been well received by its hearers, we might have thought that we were within measureable distance of a Labour Government. Here, clearly, was a man who can look beyond the advantage of his own friends to the larger interests of the country, and express his views sometimes in the language of statesmanship. Again, Mr Brownlie, in urging increased production, spoke with a fearless lucidity, and told the trade unionists some economic truths which have hitherto escaped them. "We are suffering to-day," said he, "a reduction in real wages in consequence of the increased cost of the necessaries of life. Many trade unionists fail to appreciate the very important fact that wages are got out of production, and not paid out of some inexhaustible wage fund." Meanwhile, the rank and file of the unionists, who despise the truth, and are willing to hear only such fairy stories as flatter their vanity, were getting out of hand. If they listened to Mr Bunning in silence, they rose in anger at Mr Brownlie, and the taunts and jibes of Mr Havelock Wilson made them beside themselves. He told them frankly that idlers were not to be found only in one class, that some men worked with their brains, others with their hands, and that brain-work was often more fatiguing than manual labour. So, said he to the delegates, "cut out all this claptrap," and he advised the "hot-air merchants" to remember that "their turn might come to govern, and to beware of making statements which they could not justify, or promises which they could not fulfil, because in a crowd there was always some one with a memory."

Then the hot-heads broke loose and talked the vapid nonsense which convicts the speakers of incompetence. One man declared that he wanted to save the nation's soul. Let him begin, if he can, with his own soul's salvation. Another man, evidently the victim of nervous excitement, threw argument to the winds and relied for his effect upon mere objurgation. Mr Smillie, a disciple also of the explosive school, said a vast deal that was to no purpose, and incidentally displayed his complete ignorance. A stout champion of Free Trade, he thinks that any stick is good enough to beat those who believe it right to keep their word pledged to loyal Russians, and warned his col-

leagues against the very fiscal policy which it is his habit to denounce. "If the capitalist Government," said he, "managed to crush out the Socialist movement in Russia, which God forbid, our patriotic capitalists, men who became millionaires during the war, will begin to develop with cheap labour, as they intend to do, the enormous natural resources of Russia. They will be able to flood our markets with cheap commodities, and will be prepared to do so." And why not, pray? Are not cheap untaxed commodities precisely what Mr Smillie wants? And why should he pick and choose the place of their origin?

Mr Smillie means nothing, because the power of thought has been denied him. He does not even hover round about a meaning. Clamouring for "direct action," crying aloud that there is no power in mere words, he deals in words and in words alone. Nor is he the less dangerous for that. His dupes find a perpetual solace in words, which are the most prolific begetters of revolution, and they showed their appreciation of Mr Smillie by passing what was practically a vote of censure on the Parliamentary Committee, and a vote in favour of "direct action." Not even Mr Clynes' lofty eloquence availed to influence them. His wise words fell upon deaf ears. "Remember you who seek for power," said Mr Clynes, the one man fit to lead a Labour Party, "that now it is your business, within the lines of your rights, to bow to the law so long as it is the law." What he said was lost in the general hubbub.

Ineffectual as the Labour Congress seems to be, it is worth all our attention, because the trade unionists, one and all, are set upon having a government to themselves. For our part, we are unable to perceive any merit of statesmanship in a man merely because in the far-off days, before he became an agitator, he worked with his hands. That does not seem a sufficient qualification for one who aspires to govern a great Empire. We care not a jot from what class our governors shall come. We demand only that they shall be fearless, honest, and competent, and we do not perceive that these qualities—fearlessness, honesty, competence—are the exclusive possessions of any one class. They are rarely found anywhere, and certainly they did not shine in the Congress of Trade Unionists. Incompetence is manifest in every word spoken by Messrs Smillie and Williams. If they are fearless, they are fearless only in wrong-doing and evil-speaking, and if they are honest, they are guilty of an ignorance which in a self-appointed demagogue becomes dishonesty. It is very easy not to be a Minister of the Crown. But he who aspires to hold high office may not defend himself against a charge of failure, when he has brought ruin upon his country, by a plea of ignorance. To assume a responsibility for which he is not fit, with the mere motive

of vanity or ambition, to involve his country in disgrace, is a piece of dishonesty of which no leader can absolve himself, no matter what party he may belong to. And in spite of the President's moderate oration, in spite of the clear understanding of Messrs Brownlie and Havelock Wilson, in spite of Mr Clynes' sense of statesmanship, the Congress of Glasgow convinces us that a Labour Government is happily further from the region of practical things than it was before.

What will always stand as an obstacle in the path of the Trade Unionists is an obstinate resolve to believe only what they want to believe. It is not their habit to strengthen conviction by gathered knowledge. For instance, there is not one of them that is not dogmatic concerning Russia. Whether they are active Bolshevists or not—many of them are—they have made up their minds, without research, that Lenin and Trotsky must not be opposed in their mission of rapine and murder. They will accept the evidence of no independent witnesses. They throw blue-books aside as a mere tissue of gossip, and they do not see that by this obstinate closing of eyes and ears they are disqualified from expressing an opinion. If they would listen to Colonel John Ward, who is a Labour member as well as a soldier, and need not be suspected of speaking for the "base capitalists," who are ready to confer the blessing of cheap and free imports upon Mr Smillie, we might regard their scruple with some lenience. They don't want to listen to any one who knows the facts. They proceed with the light of prejudice as their only guide, and with that dim taper before them they would flout the very sun of truth. War with Russia, they say, is unpopular with the working classes, and that is quite enough for them.

Yet Colonel John Ward has brought back such a tale of woe from Russia as might melt the heart of any man who was not stubborn in his interested and resolute ignorance. He speaks not as a politician but as a soldier, and he speaks of events in which he has played a gallant part He tells us that the cruelties and exactions of the Bolshevists have not been exaggerated. We at home know no more, he says, than a half of the horrors which have drenched Russia in blood. Moreover, he insists that we cannot in honour repudiate what we owe to our allies. This is what he has confided to a journalist, and we would that every trade unionist should be at the pains of reading it: "What I have said, and what I will repeat, is that if we desert the men in Russia whom we rallied to our standard, as much in our own interests as in the interest of Russia, our name will stink in the nostrils of every Russian who is not a Bolshevist. When we went to Russia we went to produce such conditions as should disable the Germans from transferring men to the Western front at a critical stage in the war. The war is

over, and we have won. Do you mean to tell me that we are now to turn to those who rallied round us and say, 'You have served our turn. We are going. We wish you luck.' It is unthinkable." Thus speaks Colonel John Ward; and Mr Smillie, who knows nothing whatever about the question, is content to say that a capitalist government is crushing out the socialist movement in Russia, "which God forbid!"

Here, then, is the great danger in which a Labour Government would involve the Empire: it would let inclination perform the work of knowledge, and lead the country astray by wilful ignorance. And the trade unionists approach the nationalisation of the coal-mines in the same spirit of sentimentalism wherewith they envisage Russia. Any interference in Russian affairs, they tell us, is unpopular with the working classes. The nationalisation of coal is popular; and there is an end of it. It is not quite the end. No body of men is fit to govern a parish if it yields to the cry of popularity, and we refuse to accept the dogmatism of any Congress which disdains to support its opinions with no better, stronger plea than that.

And the vexed problem of nationalisation cannot be solved by a mere assertion any more easily than the problem of Russia. The proclamation of Mr Justice Sankey carries no more weight than the malice of Mr Smillie. We care not a jot for the cant of wage-slavery. We are all wage-slaves, unless we have saved enough money to run a business of our own or to keep us in comfort, safely invested. And so long as we give good value for the wages which we earn, the simple contract does not and cannot bring with it any disgrace. Cant does not matter, sentimentalism does not matter. What does matter is the result of nationalisation to the miners and to the country, and before we can decide which is the right course to pursue, we must have placed in our hands far more and clearer evidence than we now possess. It is the business of the miners to discover whether they will enjoy under Government control the same freedom and the same wages which they enjoy under private ownership. It is for the country to find out whether the Government is able efficiently to carry out the business of coal-mining, if it add that to its other duties. It may be said at once that the *a priori* case against nationalisation is very strong. Our Government has touched no industrial enterprise that it has not ruined. Its extravagance is matched only by its incompetence. A bitter experience has taught us that a bureaucracy bungles always and is corrupt. It does not trouble to find the best man for any job that is going. There are voters to be rewarded, there are the nominees of an influential supporter in the House to be satisfied, and when these delicate matters are adjusted, the claims of efficiency are readily forgotten. Therefore

before we put an additional burden upon a Government composed of empirics, we must have it clearly demonstrated to us that a bureaucracy can bring something to the management of coal-mines which has hitherto escaped the coal-owners and their expert advisers.

The demonstration will be difficult. We have before our eyes the disastrous management of the telephones. We remember the bacon rotting in the docks. We know how much it has cost the country to hand over to the Government during the war the conduct of the railroads. Our Ministers, whenever they touched industry, have been content to make up a deficit by a subsidy—a pleasant transference of money from one pocket to another, which for a while deceives the people, and enables one public functionary or another to cook his accounts. But if an industry costs more than it seems, bankruptcy is inevitable. It does not matter whether the industry belongs to a State or to a man. Insolvency can overtake a State as swiftly as it overtakes a private speculator. And the Government of England, having gone into business on its own account, is already bankrupt. What encouragement have we, then, to ask our Government to be the universal coal-owner? So far as we have seen the evidence, none whatever; and the evidence of other States, of Germany, and of our own Dominions, chimes with that which has been put before us in England.

Yet the Trade Unionists have made up their minds in defiance of the facts; and their dogmatism proves how dangerous would be their supremacy in the State. The danger is lessened by the reflection that they cannot hope to grasp the reins of power unsupported by the other classes, and until such men as Mr Smillie are eliminated from their councils their chance is small indeed. Moreover, labour will never govern the country until it has learnt to govern itself. To-day it is unbridled and undisciplined. At Glasgow it rescinded one day what it had eagerly approved the day before, and left the country in doubt even on the pressing question whether it was or was not in favour of "direct action." What it wants it does not know. It does know—at least the branch led by the hotheads knows—that it wants nobody else to have anything. Constantly demanding higher wages, it does not inquire where the higher wages are to come from, if not from increased production. Of the industries as they were before the war, 68 per cent of the net product went to the manual workers. Of the remainder, only 23 per cent was devoted to rents, interests and profits, advertisements, and the rest. If the manual workers seized upon the poor 23 per cent, how would they be better off? The industry of Great Britain would be immeasurably reduced in efficiency, and since there would be no income upon which to levy taxes, the working class would be driven to

educate its own children, and to provide pensions for its old age.

For, let it be remembered that the working classes of Great Britain are being rapidly pauperised. The old spirit of independence which bade them shun the workhouse no longer exists. They will accept whatever doles are offered them. Their children are fed and educated, their parents are pensioned in old age, with money provided by others — provided chiefly by the middle class, which is no better off than they are, but more easily amenable to the tax-collector. And this is not all: many of them receive higher wages than the industry in which they labour can afford, and food is sold to them under cost price, the deficiency being made up by the taxpayer. It is not surprising, therefore, that we are spending two millions a day more than we can afford. It is surprising that the working classes pocket their pride, and accept whatever is given them without gratitude and as their right. Mr Smillie, indeed, not content with being crushed beneath a weight of doles and privileges, demands that the Government shall come to his heel in weak servility. If he be not obeyed, then he will call a strike, and thus we are warned in time. A nation which submits to the threats of a minority deserves the revolution and the ruin which will surely overtake it. The nation will not submit, and if it be wise it will at once organise itself, as Lord Wrenbury has suggested, so that when Mr Smillie puts his threat into execution, it will be ready to prove that no one class is indispensable of itself, that prosperity can be achieved by no other means than loyal co-operation.

It is with great regret that we record the death of Lord Beresford, as gallant a sailor as ever went to sea, as loyal a patriot as ever gave his life to the service of his country. It is sixty years since he joined the *Britannia*, and for that sixty years, on shore and afloat, he has ever put the welfare of his Empire high above his own advantage. Many are the parts which he has played in a long career, and he has played them all with ease and distinction. Though the sea has always had the first claim upon him, he has proved himself also a sportsman, a courtier and a statesman—and perhaps as sportsman and courtier he was best known in his earlier years. Not until 1882 did he find a real opportunity of distinguishing himself in his chosen profession, and he seized it eagerly. As commander of the *Condor*, at the bombardment of Alexandria, he proved that he possessed all the qualities of the fighting sailor, and well did he earn the famous message sent by the Admiral: "Well done, *Condor*." It was "well done, *Condor*," indeed, and the welldoing did not cease with the bombardment. Sent on shore after the attack, Lord Charles showed for the first time his administrative gifts; with the greatest tact he restored peace to the city,

and restored it almost without the use of force.

Henceforth Lord Charles's reputation as a sailor was firmly established, and he had no lack of chance to make it doubly sure. He was on Lord Wolseley's staff when that soldier went to relieve General Gordon at Khartum, and he commanded the Naval Brigade at Abu Klea. But it was the rescue of Sir Charles Wilson that brought him the greatest glory, and this feat will be memorable always in the annals of the Navy. Lord Wolseley went no inch beyond the truth when he described Lord Charles as "an officer whose readiness of resource and whose ability as a leader are only equalled by his daring." In truth, he was a born leader of men—a leader in whom courage and readiness and resource were instinctive.

Never did he take his profession lightly. The Navy was unto the end his dominating passion. That he might guard its interests and watch over its fighting efficiency, he went into Parliament as member for Marylebone; and in 1886 Lord Salisbury marked his high appreciation of his zeal and ability by appointing him a Junior Lord of the Admiralty. But Lord Charles was not one who could easily run in the harness of government. He did not understand the trickery of politics, nor the necessity of compromise. He knew but one aim—an invincible navy—and to reach that aim he was prepared to sacrifice himself and his career. In 1888 he resigned his office, protesting that he could not sign estimates blindfold, which he had had no hand in framing, and which he had not even read.

The objection to signing unseen estimates, excellent pretext though it was, was not Lord Charles's only pretext for resignation. He demanded of the Admiralty what was attained fully many years later —a fighting staff and better intelligence. Happily he did not resign in vain, and he had the supreme satisfaction of knowing that the Naval Defence Act, passed in 1889, was due to his willing sacrifice of himself. In truth, this early episode was characteristic of his whole career. He was never for slow methods or soft counsels. He spoke the truth openly and fearlessly, as he saw it, and suffered again and again for his temerity. Nor was he at the pains of saying afterwards, "I told you so." It was enough for him to see the Navy strengthened, and the defences of the country made secure.

Wherever he went, whatever command he held, he displayed a tireless energy and quick initiative. In 1891 he played his part in the salvage of a French warship, the *Seignelay*, which had run aground in Tripoli. At Chatham, from 1893 to 1896, he zealously worked at the dockyards under Admiral Morant, and three years later brought back from a mission to China a valuable record of what he saw and heard. Then, with intervals of political activity, he served his country at sea, until, after a series of bitter controversies, in 1909 he was

bidden by the Admiralty to haul down his flag. His correct and dignified behaviour, in circumstances of provocation, is within the memory of all. He set forth his case at length in a letter, addressed to Mr Asquith, then Prime Minister, saw it investigated by the Imperial Defence Committee, and had every reason to be satisfied with the colourless, semi-judicial finding.

Thereafter Lord Charles criticised the management of the Navy wisely and with untiring vigilance. He found no controversy too irksome, no contest too bitter, if only he might explain his views to the world. If he were unfit by the candour and energy of his character for the sly give-and-take of politics, he knew how to speak out clearly what was in his mind. In the years before the war, whose swift approach he foresaw, he never ceased to explain what duties the Navy would be asked to discharge, he was constant in urging the policy which the Admiralty should follow. The event has proved the justice of his views, and time will vindicate his courage and his foresight. When the war began he kept faithfully on the same course. Though he was not called to the councils of his King, he watched what was happening with the understanding bred of experience, and more than once was able to warn those in power of the disasters which he knew were ahead of us. The *rôle* which he played is not a *rôle* popular with easy-going Ministers, and he gained small thanks, perhaps, for what he did. Being himself, he could do no other, and he had the satisfaction of feeling that, all unauthorised though he was, he was still doing efficient service to the Empire.

He was, for the rest, a warm friend, an excellent host, and the happiest of companions. Being gifted with a quick and lively humour, he loved his jest as well as, if no better, than his friend; and his talk, bold and ample, was spiced with the wit of an old English comedy. But despite his wit and his humour, he was before all things a man of serious purpose, who would cheerfully have given up all the pleasantry of life for the sake of his King and his country. A true Irishman, he opposed Home Rule as vigorously as he defended the Navy. An aristocrat by race and temperament, he was proud of nothing so much as of the confidence reposed in him by the working classes. Some day we shall know more clearly what he did for England, and how great was the tact with which he cemented the friendship which existed, and exists, between us and our Allies. To-day we mourn a gallant sailor and a wise patriot, a kindly gentleman, whose name will long outlast the meannesses of politics and the strife of parties.

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